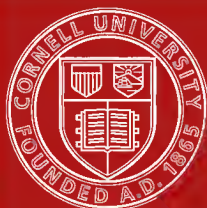


# THE MAGAZINE IN AMERICA



ALGERNON TASSIN



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## THE MAGAZINE IN AMERICA







# THE MAGAZINE IN AMERICA

BY  
ALGERNON TASSIN

WITH FRONTISPIECE



NEW YORK  
DODD, MEAD AND COMPANY

1916

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TO  
ARTHUR BARTLETT MAURICE





## PREFACE

These papers, for the most part published in *The Bookman*, present an informal history of the magazine movement in the United States, from its beginning down to the close of the nineteenth century. The author has not undertaken the business of the genuine historian. In the few studies he has encountered of magazines of special periods, he has found as many contradicted statements of fact as an informed reader may discover in his own pages. Many of the statistics of magazines have been entirely lost, partly through contemporaneous indifference to such ephemera and partly because the persons who knew the facts were willing to let them disappear. This account seeks merely to arrange our magazines and their tendencies in order, and to assemble such published opinions about both as the author in his reading has found interesting either in themselves or in their disagreement. Perfectly fair-minded people unfortunately have at the time little that is interesting to say and less occasion for saying it. Only out of some fullness of the heart have mouths spoken of matters which were mistakenly supposed to be of small concern to the general public. Editors and proprietors notoriously put their best foot forward, and avoid mention of derogatory items which competitors and contributors are as eager to detach and emphasise. As a consequence, the facts of the period are to be found only by minute search and comparison of sophisticated or biassed documents. The author has had no opportunity to verify, sift, and weigh all the collectable evidence — which is the duty of veritable history.

For such as it is, however, this running account of the magazine in America has arranged for the first time the widely scattered and submerged material which it pre-

## PREFACE

sents, and sought to make a continuous picture of the intellectual and literary movements of our country as expressed in its periodicals for one hundred and fifty years. Of the modern magazines much that might be said has been omitted, merely because it has not yet found its way to print. With them by intention as with their ancestors by necessity, the author has interviewed only the written word — the spoken though perhaps quite as reliable is at least less responsible. He has not rushed in where writers fear to tread. To everything that has been printed, however, he has helped himself liberally. Aside from the many authors, dead and living, whose reminiscences have gone to the making of this volume, he owes thanks to several surveys in specialised fields, chiefly for their valuable aid in orientation. These are Professor A. H. Smyth's *The Philadelphia Magazines, 1741-1850*; Mr. E. R. Rogers' *Four Southern Magazines*; Mr. W. B. Cairns' *Development of American Literature, 1815-1833*; Mr. W. H. Venable's *Beginnings of Literary Culture in the Ohio Valley*; and Mr. H. E. Fleming's *Magazines of a Market-Metropolis*. These have all supplied statistics. But the maker of this mosaic frankly confesses that his interest lies rather in hearing what people have thought of themselves and of each other than in the absolute facts at the bottom of their opinions; and ventures to think that in so indulging himself he gets a clearer idea, as well as a more colourful one, of the fundamental truth.

A. T.

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## CHAPTER I

### EIGHTEENTH CENTURY MAGAZINES

IN January, 1741, three days apart and in the small city of Philadelphia, were published the first two magazines of this country. These facts themselves make one suspect cut-throat work. It is perhaps significant that the stormy and colourful career of the magazine in America began with a royal row.

One was published by Andrew Bradford, the other by Benjamin Franklin. Their appearance had been preceded by the usual announcements in the newspapers and by a very unusual altercation. For Franklin claimed that the idea and the plans of the magazine had been stolen from him. Webbe, who had announced Bradford's, admitted that Franklin had told him of the project but said this did not restrain him from publishing one himself without Mr. Franklin's leave. During the quarrel both Franklin and Bradford accused each other of using their position of Post Master to foster their private ends. Only three numbers appeared of Bradford's magazine, the *American or a Monthly View*; and only six numbers of Franklin's, the *General Magazine or Historical Chronicle*. Franklin in his first number ridiculed his competitor's; but he seems not to have been proud of his own, as no mention of it occurs in his autobiography.

Between this and the end of the century there were at least forty-five magazines started. Besides those addressed to a more general audience, they included a musical magazine, a military, a German religious, and a children's magazine. Thus, the sparsely settled new States were decidedly over-exploited. When in 1787, Mathew Carey requested advice about founding the *American Museum* Jeremy Belknap wrote him from Bos-

ton: "Several attempts have been made within my memory both here and at the Southward to establish such a repository of literature, but after a year or two they have uniformly failed. To what other causes the failure may be ascribed I will not say, but this appears to me to be one, viz: the too frequent publication of them. We are fond of imitating our European Brethren in their monthly productions without considering the difference between our Circumstances and theirs. Such a country as this is not yet arrived at such a pass of improvement to keep up one or two monthly vehicles of importance." However barren were some departments of literature in the early days, then, magazines indicated at the outset their eternal disposition to multiply faster than the traffic will stand.

From a very early date editors had been keenly conscious of the need for variety. The *New England Magazine*, 1758, price eight pence a number of sixty pages, gave in an advertisement this description of its contents:

#### CONTAINING AND TO CONTAIN:

Old-fashioned writings and Select Essays,  
 Queer Notions, Useful Hints, Extracts from Plays;  
 Relations Wonderful and Psalm and Song,  
 Good Sense, Wit, Humour, Morals, all *ding dong*;  
 Poems and Speeches, Politicks, and News,  
 What *Some* will like and other *Some* refuse;  
 Births, Deaths, and Dreams, and Apparitions, Too;  
 With some Thing suited to each different *Geu* (goût?)  
 To Humour *Him*, and *Her*, and *Me*, and *You*.

The editor of the *Massachusetts Magazine* was constantly adding new departments, but insisted that all its contributions should be of a popular nature. "It has been hinted by some well-wishers that deeper researches into the arcana of science, more especially the abstruser parts of philosophy and the mathematics, would give the magazine a celebrity with the learned. In reply we beg leave to remark that the British *Universal Magazine* was materially injured by an adherence to this plan; and

America presents a more recent instance of a magazine supported by a host of scholars which literally sunk beneath the impending weight of technical terms and the pressure of amplified definitions." If they had not hitherto consulted the desires of the fair sex sufficiently or gratified the delicacy of their taste, they trusted to compensate for their negligence in the future; and they hoped at the same time that the scientific sons of Providence and the accomplished seniors of Yale would deposit their respective offerings at the shrine of Fame; and it could be seen that the proceedings of Congress and the Commonwealth had been detailed with all the amplitude which prescribed limits would allow. The *Nightingale* was establishing a department of Criticism which would give candid and impartial accounts of all American publications. "The food which the editors served up has been found to be disagreeable to some fastidious palates and inadequate to supply the cravings of some insatiable stomachs. Yet they do not conceive their dishes to be filled with the mere whipt-syllabub of learning and the flummery of the muses. The most hungry might have found a solid beefstake of science to feast upon, and they are sure the pepper of criticism and satire have been given in abundance sufficient to prevent a nausea. Good humour has always smiled at their table, and variety has garnished the viands." Indeed, when one considers the exceedingly heavy fare offered almost without exception by the books and pamphlets of the day, the magazines should have afforded a delightful treat. Political and religious controversies were sedulously avoided by most. All of them had their regular light essayists of the Bickerstaff lineage — the Gleaner, the Drone, the Babblor, the Trifler, the Scribbler, Philobiblicus. The poetry sometimes constituted a fourth or a sixth of the issue, and with a recklessness which would turn the modern editor pale was collected in a department at the end of each number. The chief function of poetry as a filler-up of chinks left between more solid prose had not yet evolved.

Every magazine had its Pegasus, its Cabinet of Apollo, its Seat of the Muses, its Parnassiad; even the most prosaic had its Poetical Essays or its Poetical Provision. Nor was the poetry all of the lofty variety of "An Elegant Ode on the Mechanism of Man"; there were lines "To a Lady on Striking a Fly with Her Fan," or to "The Fly On Being Let into a Lady's Chamber"; and there was much narrative verse, serious or jocose. Even the *Boston Magazine*, 1784, six of the twelve original members of which became the parents of the Massachusetts Historical Society by virtue of their design to publish a *Gazeteer* of the State giving a sketch of every town in the commonwealth, announced that though it would rather be too grave than too sprightly and though it hoped it would never be trifling or superficial or ludicrous, it would apply itself to the publication of everything that is curious and entertaining.

All the editors, too, were alive to the desirableness of embellishing their magazines with "elegant copper-plates." A frequent announcement runs, "As soon as a number of Subscribers equal to the expence of this magazine are procured, every number shall then be ornamented with some pleasing representation." These were very expensive, and in days when there were very few advertisements (indeed, almost none at all in the monthlies, except on the cover pages) they were a decided consideration. Yet at a time when into the average household never entered a picture of any sort, they must have given great delight. The first volume of the *Boston Magazine* contained twenty-seven illustrations; its plan was two engravings and a piece of music to each number. The *Massachusetts Magazine* tried for a time the experiment of furnishing eight additional pages of letter press in lieu of copper plate engravings, "but the admirers of this polite art earnestly called for their re-assumption." Thus in addition to popularising literature, the early magazines were popularising art also.



The prospectus of the New York *Instructor*, 1755, might well have served for most.

The design of this paper is to communicate to the Publick *Select Pieces* on the *Social Duties*, and such historical or Speculative *Remarks* as may be thought useful to be collected from the best English writers; which if read either in a Morning at *Tea*, or after *Dinner* by the Younger Sort, cannot fail of leaving a good effect upon the mind, as well as improving them in their Reading and Morals. If any *Getlemen of Taste* will please to recommend any particular *Pieces*, all due Regard shall be paid to them in their Turn. And these collected into One or more *Volumes* will be worth preserving, especially to those who cannot readily come at the Originals. Occasional *News* will sometimes be added likewise. N.B. No *Controversy* of any kind will have Admittance. To be continued Weekly (if suitable Encouragement). Price, Two Coppers. Whoever pleases to preserve these Papers entire and will return them to the *Printer* at the end of the year shall have a Copper a Piece for each.

Alas for the thrifty who saved their papers! It is thought that only ten numbers were published.

Almost as frustrated as their appeal for subscriptions was their demand for original pieces. The second volume of the *Massachusetts Magazine* laments the want of more originality. "Indulge us to observe that men of learning in this country are not always blest with leisure. Yet the *Massachusetts Magazine* can compare in point of originality with its American brethren and transatlantic cousins. There is no work of this kind in any quarter of the globe which is totally original. A correspondence has been established in Europe, and an agreeable interchange of literary good offices promises to be a happy result." The second volume of the *Boston Magazine* confesses that it began with high hopes of originality, the first volume indeed having a third of its pieces original. But the second volume has been compelled to publish many extracts, which will, however, increase learning, improve the morals, and mend the heart. The editor is particularly obliged to the sons of Harvard for

their productions and he shall always be happy to have it in his power to announce to the public the effusions of their pens. The *American Moral and Sentimental*, New York, 1797, printed for the editor next door to the Tea-Water pump, was a type of a great many magazines which did not essay the struggle for originality. This publication, as perhaps might be gathered from its name, reeks with edification. The *Philadelphia Magazine and Review*, 1799, thought that the desire for originality had wrecked many ventures. "We are led to believe that they failed for some other cause than the want of discernment or liberality in those to whom the editor looked for support. For one publication of ours we receive at least five hundred from Great Britain . . . yet we shall always be glad to print any original verse or prose or agreeable talk." Mathew Carey designed the *American Museum* in 1787 to fill a new niche. "Having long observed in the various papers printed on this continent a vast number of excellent and invaluable productions, I have frequently regretted that the perishable nature of the vehicles which contained them entailed oblivion on them after a very confined period of usefulness and circulation. The respectable character who now fills the presidential chair of this commonwealth having expressed the same sentiment a few months since, I conceived that a publication designed to preserve the most valuable could not fail to be highly useful and consequently among an enlightened people to meet with encouragement." He contemplated also a re-publication of many of the best pamphlets prior to and during the war, with occasional selections from European prints. But even this lofty design had room for pieces of a more popular kind, though, with the exception of some of the verse, none were for entertainment merely. In the announcement for volume two he said: "So far was public opinion against it and so very confined were the expectations formed of a work which professed to be void of originality and to be in some measure only a handmaiden to

the newspapers, that at the appearance of the first number there were not twenty subscribers."

The editors all felt that their mission was to educate the people. "M" is writing to a magazine and accounts for the defective literature of his native country by the scarcity of books.

There is hardly a library in the United States, public or private, which would enable a man to be thoroughly learned in any one language. The public library of Philadelphia is a respectable one for its age and will probably in time exhibit a very large collection. The same may be said of the library belonging to the University of Cambridge in Massachusetts. If I mistake not, however, they are both very defective, and the latter particularly so, in modern publications. Nor are the deficiencies of our public libraries by any means supplied by private collections, or by the enterprise and literary character of booksellers. There is hardly a greater desideratum in the United States than a bookseller who to a large capital in business would unite a taste for literature, a zeal to promote it, and a disposition to make the public as early as possible acquainted with every new publication of value that is made either in Europe or America. As it is, we seldom see a European publication here, unless it be of a peculiarly popular cast or unless it be sent for by a gentleman who has heard of its character. Thus you see, Mr. Editor, I view everything of this kind with cordial satisfaction and cannot help flattering myself that the establishment of your magazine will materially subserve the interest of letters and science in America.

The tenor of another letter is the same.

It is with pleasure we observe the numerous literary institutions in these States, happily calculated to disseminate a knowledge of the Arts and Sciences. But very few of our Youth can be educated in these seminaries, and though good policy may forbid that any considerable number of them should receive a collegiate education, it may, notwithstanding, be of essential service to the community that our young men in general who shall devote themselves to commerce and to mechanical and agricultural employment should possess considerable degrees of literature. A deficiency of learning hath often been very sensibly regretted by many worthy characters in these States when elevated to public and important offices; and frequently ignorance hath not only exposed them to ridicule but been injurious to the interests of the public. We mention particularly a cir-

cumstance that exposed a very popular patriot in London a few years past, to contempt and occasioned him to become a subject of ridicule in the public papers of the metropolis. In an oration he made at Guildhall, instead of speaking in the superlative degree, which he wished to have done, through ignorance he made use of the double comparative — *more better*.

This last appeared in the *Christian's, Scholar's and Farmer's Magazine*, published By a Number of Gentlemen in Elizabethtown, New Jersey. The title is a delightful illustration of that breadth of aim which most of our early magazines exhibited. It was the design of this performance to promote religion, to diffuse knowledge, and to aid the Husbandman in his very necessary and important toil. The full title of the *Massachusetts Magazine* was Monthly Museum of Knowledge and Rational Entertainment — Containing Poetry, Musick, Biography, History, Physics, Geography, Morality, Criticism, Philosophy, Mathematicks, Agriculture, Architecture, Chemistry, Novels, Tales, Romances, Translations, News, Marriages and Deaths, Meteorological Observations, etc., etc. But the desire to cover as wide a ground and to give as much as possible for the money is perhaps illustrated best by Mathew Carey's announcement that he had procured a set of smaller types (his type, like that of all the magazines, was already maddeningly minute) better calculated for the purpose of his magazine; as they would comprise one-third more matter than the former in the same number of pages!

"In America," ran the announcement of the Philadelphia *Monthly Magazine*, "periodical publications may properly be termed the literature of the people. The state of manufactures, agriculture, arts may as yet be deemed in their infancy, and in them new discoveries and improvements are daily making. We solicit the aid of our readers that these may become known. Medical Facts and observations, Law Cases and Decisions, together with the miscellaneous material which usually adorns a magazine we intend to publish. Magazine poetry has usually

been considered as synonymous with the most trivial and imperfect attempts at verse-writing [in 1798!], but no piece will be admitted which cannot lay claim to true genius and poetic merit. Review of new publications will proceed generally by extracts."

It is possible that each new editor, even with before him examples of constant failure, hoped to make some money (if he did, he spent it at once on enlargement), and certainly he expected to pay expenses. But chiefly he thought of himself as a torch-bearer. To popularise literature in the States, where few books of literature were read and almost none were published; to disseminate news of improved ways of doing things among people who would never hear of them otherwise — this was their high calling. Making all allowance for their stately and diplomatic periods, it animates every line of their announcements.

Nor did either editors or contributors apparently have any desire to exploit themselves. Anonymity was in general the rule of the day. The editors of the *Christian's*, *Scholar's* and *Farmer's* sincerely regret that want of leisure will oblige them to discontinue it. As not literary fame but the benefit of mankind was the great object of the editors in publishing this miscellany, they beg leave still to conceal their names from public view. "The imprinted seal of secrecy forbids the development of names," announced the *Massachusetts Magazine*, "but the late graduated sons of Harvard and Hanover will pardon the well-founded presumption that our readers are greatly indebted to many of them for the instructive essay or the amusing tale." Most of the articles were either unsigned or signed by fanciful names indicative of the style of the writer. There were almost no hired editors, they were often the printers and generally the proprietors. Thomas Paine was an exception. He was engaged by R. Aitken as editor of the *Pennsylvania Magazine* in 1775 at a salary of twenty-five pounds a year. The contract, says Isaiah Thomas, called for a

certain quantity of original matter, but often he found it difficult to prevail on Paine to comply with his engagement. Aitken is responsible for the statement that Paine would never write for him without a decanter of brandy on the desk and the workmen waiting for the copy. The first prominent appearance of Freneau was in the *United States Magazine* with a metrical version of a psalm. It was of course unsigned, and a footnote says it was written "by a young gentleman to whom in the course of this work we are greatly indebted." The *Weekly Magazine*, begun in Philadelphia in 1898, introduces us to the first professional man of letters in America. (It was *The Man at Home*, by Charles Brockden Brown, unsigned, and it ran through thirteen numbers. In the second volume he began his first important novel, *Arthur Mervyn*. Mathew Carey in the *American Museum* had a list of notable contributors — Franklin, Dr. Rush, Freneau, Trumbull, Humphreys, Francis Hopkinson, and Governor Livingston. Most of these articles appeared for the first time; and thus it is seen that Carey's boast that he had provided a medium to the literary talent for the country was well founded. He, alone of all the editors, said that he rapidly accumulated material beyond his needs.

✓ In September, 1786, the *Columbian Magazine or Monthly Miscellany*, was inaugurated by Mathew Carey and four others. It was modelled upon the *Gentleman's Magazine* and the *London Magazine*, and was decidedly the most ambitious periodical project yet undertaken in America. The expense of printing alone was said to be one hundred pounds a month. In December Carey withdrew, saying that he could not work with so many editors. The preface to volume one announced that the great purpose of the magazine was to communicate essays of entertainment without sacrificing decency to wit, and to disseminate the works of science without sacrificing intrinsic utility to a critical consideration of style and composition; and it indulged the pleasing and patriotic hope

of advancing the best interests of society. | Its obligations to society the *Columbian*, in common with most of our early magazines, took with extreme seriousness. "Osmyn of Bassora, an Eastern Tale," it answered a correspondent, "is prettily written, but to what end? Unless rendered subservient to the interests of virtue, compositions of this kind are unworthy of attention. However distinguished, they are but a splendid nothing." What tales it published were patently edifying, as may be guessed from their titles: *Chariessa, or a Pattern for the Sex*; *Angelico, or the Munificent Heiress*; *The Danger of Sporting with Innocent Credulity*. The writer of *Some Verses On Applying Pigeons to a Lady's Feet When Dying* is informed that the circumstance is in their opinion very improper for a subject of gallantry. Nor are they by any means content with matter alone; form is to be regarded. *Lavinia, Junior*, is told though her poem is replete with good sentiments, as a poem it is not sufficiently correct and finished; however disposed they might be to favour a young female pen which seems to merit encouragement, the public eye will make no allowances. *The Western Tour* is too much like verse to be good prose and too prosaic to be anything like a poem. The address to the Public affixed to volume two reads as follows: "The completion of another year furnishes the customary opportunity of rendering our thanks to those who have contributed to support this work by their subscriptions or to embellish it by the exercise of their talents. If the public find no reason to be dissatisfied with the number or variety of the latter description, the proprietors will feel less disposition to lament the insufficiency of the former. They have uniformly declared that the emoluments which might well have been expected from their undertaking formed but a secondary object; and in truth, as the account stands, after something more than two years of labour and expence, unless they have succeeded in affording a rational entertainment to their readers, they must suffer the mortification of a

defeat in every hope." Variety they had certainly afforded: literary essays grave and light; The Forerunners, an American tale in several instalments portraying the history of the country and of the Constitution; also in instalments the History of the Late War, and the biography of Governor Winthrop; many articles of information on improvements in agriculture and manufacture; regular departments of Historical Scraps, Foreign and Domestic Intelligence, Law Budget, Literary and Political Fables, Household Receipts, The Columbian Parnassiad, Marriage and Death Announcements from all the States, and Meteorological Observations. In May, 1789, the magazine gave an extended account of Washington's progress to New York and his receptions on the way. For entertainment there are the usual letters to an Old Bachelor and from Maiden Aunts to their Nieces; a humorous description of the manners and fashions of London, in a letter from a Citizen of America to his correspondent in Philadelphia; and letters on the state of society in Philadelphia and the various pursuits of social pleasure. This last is by The Trifler, who conducts a regular department in a sprightly fashion.

This city, Mr. Trifler, differs very essentially from New York in the great outlines of society. In Philadelphia there are several classes of company—the *cream*, the *new-milk*, the *skim-milk*, and the *canaille* (as I have heard them whimsically divided); but in New York there are only the *genteel* and the *vulgar*. In the latter place every person whose manners and education are above the vulgar, is entitled to rank with the genteel; but in the former all the modifications of birth, fortune, and politics are to be consulted in order to ascertain the upper circle of acquaintance. The cream generally curdles into a small group in the most eligible situation in the room; the new milk seems floating between the wish to coalesce with the cream and to escape from the skim-milk; and the skim-milk in a fluent kind of independence laughs at the anxiety of the new-milk and grows sower upon the arrogance of the cream. Hence it is, sir, that our concerts and assemblies have lost their charms—for the superiority established on the one hand and the mortification felt upon the other, seem to have produced the resolution, that



never again shall the ears of cream and new-milk listen to the same melody, or their feet caper in the same dance. Notwithstanding these variances, however, each class closely imitates its immediate superior; and from the conduct of one you may easily conceive the conduct of all.

Florio has fretted himself into a fever that almost cost him his life, because a modest taylor had made a yellow pair of breeches decently large for his limbs, and had not carried the cape of his coat as high as the crown of his hat. It is not within the scope of my present subject to animadvert upon a fashion which exposes some things that ought not to be seen and conceals others which need not be hidden; but I will mention *en passant* that it is reported one part of the fashion was introduced by an Irish gentleman and the other by an unfortunate adventurer who wished to keep from public view the odious depredations of the pillory. Of the female dresses it may be said that forever changing they are still the same. Miss Becky Catastrophe, a young lady of diminutive size, has quitted the ball room in the extreme mortification because her bishop was not as large as Mrs. McRump's, a matron whose natural swell might have disclaimed the assistance of art; and Mrs. Palace has scarcely excited so much envy by the elegance of her manners and the brilliancy of her equipage as by her voluminous *craw*, which, like the fortifications of Gibraltar, serves to keep everybody at a distance, but then the difficulty of conveying provisions to the garrison is equally great in both instances.

The preface to volume three reads: "The utility of a comprehensive periodical miscellany as it tends to diffuse knowledge among all ranks, has been acknowledged in every government, but in America the importance of such a work is extremely obvious. The literati are therefore earnestly requested to favour this native production with their communications, and it is hoped the public in general will lend their names to the list of its supporters." The increase of the latter under the new plan, they announce gratefully, is considerable; and they have obtained a circulation also in different parts of Europe and the West Indies. The new plan, occasioned by their merger with a projected magazine, brought them a new title, *The Universal Asylum and Columbian*. This was issued "By a Society of Gentlemen," whereas the previous editor had been Dallas. Part of the latter's policy was

to report the debates of the State Convention; and the Federalists, becoming annoyed at his attitude, finally withdrew their subscriptions. Benjamin Rush had written to Noah Webster (Mr. Albert Smyth tells us in his *Philadelphia Magazines*), "From the impudent conduct of Mr. Dallas in misrepresenting the proceedings and speeches in the Pennsylvania Convention, as well as from his deficiency of matter, the *Columbian Magazine* of which he is editor is in the decline." But most of its readers did not agree with him. The pages had been increased from fifty-four to sixty without additional expense to the subscribers and not less than two copper-plates published. An *Impartial Review of American Publications* had been added, and the proprietors announced that they intended to make this a permanent basis on which a more extensive review might be established. At times a second edition was necessary, and the types were reset at great expense. An appendix was published containing the laws of the United States, and these with the *Political Register*, it was hoped would extend the usefulness of the magazine. It printed also many authentic documents in its history of the Revolution, which ran through several volumes.

In fact, the continued and increasing success of the *Columbian* made it unique among American eighteenth century magazines. Nor did it die, like most of them, of starvation. It preferred suicide with honour. The number for January, 1792, they had increased to eighty pages to make room for a report on manufactures. A note on the cover read: "We fear it will not be in our power to forward this work to some gentlemen in the interior parts of the country unless Congress shall think it proper to amend the post-office bill so as to place monthly on the same footing with daily or weekly publications." Congress did not think proper, and at the end of that year they announced their discontinuance. "The law which charges for monthly publication the postage rate on private letters or packages is a prohibition as injurious

in its consequences as the principles on which it is founded are partial and oppressive. The postal laws of Great Britain, which transported magazines on the same terms as newspapers, were continued in America for some years; and the salutary effects were apparent in the political and other useful information diffused among the people. That this privilege should be wrested from them so soon after their struggle for liberty and equal rights is at once a subject for astonishment and regret. The operation of this unequal and oppressive law having rendered it impossible to convey this miscellany to their numerous subscribers in the interior parts of this country but at the expence of losing a great proportion of them through a bad conveyance, they have determined to relinquish the undertaking and employ their time and capital in a way which may be more conducive to their private interest."

From the very first the magazines had cocked a disdainful calculating eye on the woman-interest. Of the twenty-three articles in a number of the *General Magazine* ten are connected with parliamentary proceedings. The others are religious, philosophical, or informational, the lightest being a dialogue against ridiculing personal defects. In the midst of all this comes oddly a package of letters from a Mrs. Martha Harward, purporting to be genuine and found after her decease. "The fate of the writer," reads the head-line, "is a strong instance of the violence of human passions when they get loose from the government of reason and the restraints of religion." The lines are a poignant cry in a humdrum world. On the back of one incoherent sobbing letter is this superscription. "To the most inhuman of his sex, W. P. Read, Betrayer, read, pity one moment. But ever forgive your Patty. For yours, come happiness or woe I ever am. Could I have parted any other way, I for your dear sake would. Impossible was it to live without your love. Forgive, my dear, dear Creature. To Death, to all Eternity must my soul adore her Billy. Forgive too

severe Reproaches. You could not love; oh, how could such a wretch as I expect it. Adieu forever to your wretched Darling Patty." Poor Patty! Excellent opportunity for sermonising as her letters afford, one feels resentfully that they were made to suffer this last indignity of all not so much to point a moral as to adorn a tale — to add one touch of crimson colour to an otherwise dull page.

So all along. With a dancing-master bow, derisively *de rigueur*, the editors make their compliments to ladies, exploiting their sins and their follies and their vanities while pretending to censure them — for the sake of the human interest the long list of failures had shown was indispensable. The *Royal American*, Boston, began life in 1774, an exceptionally grave magazine, with such a sense of fact, indeed, that a number was delayed a week on account of the Meteorological Register and finally printed with an explanation for its absence. But as time went on it felt the need of popularising, and began to insert letters from lorn or perplexed females. "Sir: I am addressed by two gentlemen of equal merit but show neither the least encouragement, and assure them I am determined never to alter my present happy state of life. But these, they say, are things of course, for all women say the same. Pray, Sir, is it not a misfortune that a woman's resolution carries no weight? and must those who have fortitude enough suffer for the inconstancy of the rest of the sex? By indulging this a place in your magazine, I hope to put a stop to their pretensions. Your obliged Humble Servant, Rosalinda." "Mr. Editor, does not conjugal happiness immediately decrease, or does the fondest husband 'after matrimony's over Hold out more than half a lover'? And is not this a considerable objection against matrimony? In your next I expect an answer. Yours, etc., Lucy." But Lucy never heard, for there was no next. The magazine ended abruptly on account of the Revolution. It is another of the few magazines that did not die of starvation; nor did it seem

likely that it would have done so, for Isaiah Thomas, who printed it for six months of its eleven, says it had a handsome list of subscribers. It had had a tempestuous career. The prospectus was issued many months before its first number, but the turbulent state of public affairs delayed its appearance and fretted its brief existence, and the blockade of the port finally compelled it to suspend.

The first magazine that openly catered to women was the *Gentleman and Lady's Town and Country*, Boston, sold at Shakespear's Head. It appeared in 1784 and was only a nine months' wonder. Its tone was rather brisk, and its desire for a wider variety than had been obtained before was somewhat unfortunately symbolised by its several styles of type. Their wish was "to please rather than to wound, woman the noblest work of God." In the first number the editors present their most respectful compliments and solicit the Candour of the public in favour of the magazine which is now submitted to the benevolent age. The embellishment of a frontispiece and other plates they could not obtain, but take the liberty of proffering a beautiful engraving from the design of an excellent master to be bound up with the volume at the close of the year. The list of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, etc., will be procured and duly inserted from this and the neighbouring towns. In the room of Meteorological Observations they flatter themselves to afford something more agreeable to the general taste than the account of snow-storms after the sky is serene or the history of North Westers when the wind is South East. A pleasing hope is indulged that the Learned and Ingenious will honour them with a valuable correspondence. All pieces of merit will be carefully noticed, and those which are refused neither blasted by indelicate censure nor solemn criticism. The Ladies in particular are requested to patronise this work by adding the elegant polish of the Female Pencil, where purity of sentiment and impassioned fancy are happily blended together.

The policy of this magazine was decidedly to pamper

the ladies. Most of the tales are love-tales, and there are many more than usual. Those traditional elegant employments of women, poetical enigmas and rebuses, are conspicuous; and the department of Parnassian Blossoms grew and waxed fat. Its essays show flattering attention to the gentler kind. The Advantages of a Mutual Correspondence Between the Two Sexes; Desultory Thoughts Upon the Utility of Encouraging a Degree of Self-Complacency, Especially in Female Bosoms; Advice to a Young Lady Concerning Marriage (wherein Leonora is advised to emulate the example of Maria, whose modesty will not permit her to attend more than one ball a winter and even then accompanied by her husband); Rules and Maxims for Promoting Matrimonial Happiness, Addressed to Ladies (wherein they are cautioned to read frequently the marriage service not overlooking the word Obey, and to consider that the person they are going to spend their days with is a man not an angel, and not to dispute with him be the occasion what it will). Interest was adroitly carried over from month to month by letters and advertisements. C. N. announces that he wants a wife who will agree to his system of economy and is agreeable in her person, "with such perfections as are necessary for my circumstances, who will give up luxuries and propagate love." Such a lady will favour him by giving him notice in the next month's production. Julia, in reply, says she is one of many prudent, discreet females, unmarried and as capable of propagating love as himself; she desires, however, a description of his person in the next number before advancing further. A. B. writes that her husband left her shortly after the conjugal rites were ended and, void to all humanity, took a second wife; she wants to know, since her husband married first, if she can lawfully marry during his life; or if it is felony in her, was it not in him also?

Scarcely longer lived the second magazine which recognised the sex in its title. This one, published in Philadel-

phia in 1792, By a Literary Society, announced itself as being entirely devoted to their affairs, and was called the *Lady's Magazine and Repository of Entertaining Knowledge*. The announcement is of unusual interest in several ways.

The first volume of the *Lady's Magazine* is now submitted in all deference to the perusal of the fair daughters of Columbia. The extraordinary marks of applause with which the Ladies of Philadelphia received the proposals for this work claims our warmest acknowledgments. The female patronesses of literature while they discover an understanding in the fairest part of intelligent creation to distinguish works of real merit from the false glare of empty profession, at the same time also shed a lustre on the amiable qualities which adorn the minds of the fair. It is theirs to give ease to the weary traveller in the rugged paths of science and soften the rigours of intense study; it is theirs to chase the diffidence of bashful merit and give real dignity to the boldest thought. As to the reception this publication may meet with in the world of literature, we hope we are secure from the attacks of envy or malevolence, since it is devoted to the fair sex. Every lover of the ladies will stand forth as a champion in defence of a work peculiarly calculated for the instruction and amusement of the lovely. It has been observed that monthly magazines are so contracted that they leave the reader in ignorance and suspense from one month to another as to the sequel or winding up of an interesting piece. It is proposed to have the *Lady's Magazine* published every six months in a handsome large octavo volume of at least three hundred pages, ornamented with an elegant frontispiece and marble cover. It is presumed the above mode of publishing a work of this nature will be preferred to a monthly one, as it shall never be stuffed with that disgusting and worn-out expression *to be continued*. The sex in general may rely on the editor's utmost endeavours to render it one of the most lively and instructive publications now in circulation. Their correspondence is respectfully requested in either poetry or prose. The elegant productions of their pen have hitherto adorned the most valuable libraries, and it is expected the females of Philadelphia are by no means deficient in those talents which have immortalised the names of a Montague, a Craven, a More, and a Seward in their inimitable writings. If the present work meets with the encouragement we have reason to expect, it is intended to adorn the succeeding volumes with an engraving to each number, with the addition of the newest and most fashionable patterns of needlework for gowns, aprons, etc.

The frontispiece presents the Genius of the Ladies' Magazine accompanied by the Genius of Emulation, who carries in her hand a laurel crown, approaching Liberty and submitting to her, kneeling, a copy of the Rights Of Woman. But lest you may think you have in this poetic allegory an early harbinger of the suffrage movement, let us hasten to quote further from the announcement. "Persons of erudition and learning have suggested to us that a book of this kind will be universally recommended in all boarding schools throughout the country — as it is to contain everything requisite to disseminate the knowledge of real life, portray virtue in the most amiable point of view, inspire the Female Mind with a love of religion, of patience, prudence, and fortitude. In short, whatever tends to form the *accomplished Woman*, the Complete Economist, and the greatest of all treasures, A Good Wife."

The first number disclosed an adroitness worthy of longer life than a year. A number of letters were published. "The men have every access to books at college, but our sex are kept at very short allowance by our parents, who are afraid to give us improper books and do not know what are or are not proper. Signed, A Multitude of Subscribers." "We are of the opinion that you ought frequently to give us articles that are calculated for gentlemen; I would therefore advise you to omit many things that are of the feminine kind. Signed, More Than One Half Your Subscribers." Miranda writes that she is tired of the continual reprehensions of woman's dress and recommends that other subjects be found for censure or satire. Matrona is glad to hear the follies and the foibles of the sex will appear in their true colours, especially the modes of dress, which are becoming every day more and more ridiculous. Mary, Lydia, and Rebecca write that they have nothing in their library but old musty *Spectators* and hope that they may hear of all the new novels and plays. Hannah Motherly writes that they must caution the fair against fiction. Simon Soberly



and Tim Noodle write what you might expect of them. These and similar letters the editor presents with an intimation that every taste will be satisfied, and with dark allusions to the farmer who tried to please every one in his treatment of his ass.

There is a series called the Ladies' Friend (wherein Emilia thinks aloud on bashfulness, conjugal affection, benevolence, and the like) and also one called Letters From a Brother To A Sister at Boarding School. (Strangely prophetic of a more famous series in a much later Philadelphia magazine, the burden of which is the same.) Thus even in that newest of new things, a woman's paper, there is nothing new under our sun.

In his preface to volume two of the *American Museum* Mathew Carey wrote: "After a careful examination of the various shoals on which periodical publications have been wrecked in this and other countries, I am in dread of only one — which I am almost ashamed to intimate. This shoal is a want of due punctuality in paying the subscriptions. These being small, each individual is but too apt to suppose it a matter of great indifference whether he pays *his* quota at the time appointed or in six or twelve months afterwards. This is a great mistake. It is further to be observed that the expence of sending twice or thrice or, as is often the case, four times for the amount of a subscription, bears no small proportion to the sum received." This was, indeed, one of the chief reasons for wreckage. Whatever magazines survive the year return thanks, though often somewhat hollowly, for increase of subscriptions but all call attention (with a doughty diplomacy in which no note of weariness is allowed to enter!) to the great number of old ones remaining unpaid. The *Massachusetts Magazine*, having weathered six volumes, regrets that the remissness of their subscribers at a distance (together with the appreciation of journey-work and the enhanced price of paper) will necessitate them to omit publication for three months after the completion of the present volume, to collect

outstanding debts and make plans for resuming publication on an improved plan. Isaiah Thomas inserts the following notice in his *Worcester Magazine* — a weekly “Containing Politicks, Miscellanies, Poetry, and News,” published 1786–1788 as a substitute for his newspaper, the *Spy*, in order to avoid the tax on newspapers, which he thought an improper restraint on the press.

Please to *Read* it! Somehow or other, many persons who subscribe to newspapers and magazines never bother themselves to make payment. When the Printer gives by way of advertisement a *general dun*, they either think that they are not called upon or whether they pay or not it will be of little consequence as the debt is small, or they content themselves with thinking that *sometime or other* they will call or send him the money due, or otherwise they will send him some articles of produce to discharge their accounts. Thus by some means or other the printer remains unpaid. He now requests *All* who are indebted to him (Post-Riders are also desired to remember that *they* are included in the word *All*) to come and settle with him. If brought within *three* weeks from the date, he will receive the following articles of produce in payment, viz.: Wood by the load or cord, Butter, Cheese, Beef, Pork, Wheat Flour by the Barrel, Rye and Indian Corn, Wheat, and Flax Seed. For all these articles the market price will be paid. Those who now neglect to pay him will not think themselves ill-used if their accounts are lodged with a Magistrate.

The South Carolina *Weekly Museum*, a magazine of thirty-two pages, took the unusual liberty of announcing in stern accents on the completion of its first volume, in 1797, that it would not deviate from the rule of making theirs altogether a Cash business. Their severity in this respect did not de-humanise them in other ways, however, for they announce also that the unavoidable delay in getting out the first, the January, number arose because the festive season had been celebrated by some of their hands in a more liberal manner than usual; and to make up the deficiency they had added a supplement and would at the end of six months present the public with an additional number. One of the favourite tricks to catch the dilatory subscriber was the presentation of the seventh

number gratis on payment for the preceding six. The attempt to make the subscriber pay half his year's subscription on receipt of the first number never seems to have succeeded. In one way and another most of the magazines echoed the *New American* published in 1758 at Woodbridge, New Jersey, by Sylvanus Americanus. "This number completing the first quarter, we earnestly hope our kind subscribers will now (agreeable to the proposals) discharge their arrears to the Gentleman who took in their subscriptions, that we may be enabled to proceed in this expensive undertaking." As this magazine was a very tidy little affair, the expense must have been considerable; but in this case as in most of the others the kind (or courteous or respectable or obliging or generous) patrons remained adamant, and the editor suspended.

Charles Brockden Brown, who seems always to have had the magazine bee buzzing in his bonnet, wrote to his brother some time before he started in 1799, the *New York Monthly*, his first periodical: "Four hundred subscribers will repay the annual expence of sixteen hundred dollars. As soon as this number is obtained, the printers will begin and trust to the punctual payment of these for reimbursment. All above four hundred will be a clear profit for me: one thousand subscribers will provide \$4,500 and deducting the annual expence will leave \$2,700." Thus it will be seen from this calculation (which proved like that of the potter who carried the tray on his head) that the expense of running a magazine was not very great. At the end of the first volume of the *Philadelphia Monthly Magazine*, 1708, the editor returns thanks to his nine hundred subscribers, but hopes that a more extensive circulation will allow him to engage men of talent to help him, for the whole business of editing, attending the press, and circulating the numbers is now done by himself, Thomas Condie. The story was everywhere the same whether the editor could afford to get any one to help him or not. Mathew Carey, in his auto-

biography, said of the *American Museum*, "I was much attached to this work and had great reluctance to abandon it, unproductive and vexatious as was the management of it."

The gallant story is perhaps best told in the various announcements of the *New York Magazine* which, begun in 1790, had an exceptionally long career. This was a publication of sixty-four pages, and George Washington and John Adams headed the list of subscribers. The preface to volume two hints at the well-known fact that they could employ their press to more advantage in the present state of pecuniary emoluments, but they will continue in the hope that they will derive a compensation from the liberality of their fellow-citizens. The growing opulence of the city induces them to believe that they will one day meet the reward of their present labours. Volume three announces that though the subscription is still lacking, the magazine has thus far outlived any attempts of the kind heretofore made in the city. Volume four says that the history of printing could be challenged for a single instance of persons willing to persevere in a work whose profits were so very inadequate. Their own particular interest and the profession of holding up the Literary Reputation of this city are equally responsible for the continuance. In the latter respect they have been successful to a degree beyond expectancy. The typographical part has been executed in a manner that makes them proud. Such engravings as have appeared have been executed in as neat a manner as could be done on this side of the Atlantic, the print is beautiful. Volume six says it has often been remarked that literature receives but a partial welcome in the United States, and with respect to magazines the observation is trite that their patrons are too few in number to render an undertaking of that kind an object worthy of attention either as it respects emolument or improvement. "It is impossible to arrest the attention of those attached to the active scene of business. In the pleasure with which we present

this volume, we have only to regret that the number is not so respectable as the class addressed." The next volume is made to begin a new series, so that subscribers may neither possess an incomplete work nor go to the expense of procuring the six preceding volumes. These considerations, they think, have withheld some new subscribers. The proprietors have not heretofore secured a reasonable compensation for printing, exclusive of the labour of *editing*. The preface to the second volume of the new series announces that the magazine has toiled eight long years, but the harvests have been poor indeed. "Shall every attempt of this nature desist in these States? Shall our country be stigmatised, odiously stigmatised, with want of taste for literature?"

The appeal to patriotism is everywhere voiced by these sturdy soldiers of a forlorn hope. The *United States* in 1779 had announced that America must show that she was able to cultivate the belles-lettres, even disconnected with Great Britain, and disprove the British jeer that the colonies when separated from England would become mere illiterate ourang-outangs. "Foreigners view works of this nature as evidence of the literary character of our city," implored the *New York Magazine*. "Shall we not then exert ourselves to appear as respectable abroad as we really are at home? Strangers generally refer their decision of the state of learning to the number of original compositions a place boasts. Though originality is not an absolute requisite to the composition of a good magazine, nevertheless it is a weighty consideration. Numbers of the Sons and Daughters of Columbia are well qualified to shine in the walks of literature. Let each, then, lend a helping hand." Even more vigorous appeals were made in the name of local pride. "We believe it to be pretty generally the case," said this magazine, "that other periodicals of America receive considerable support from neighbouring States, but such is not the case with us. No one will ever doubt the ability of the city of New York to support a monthly publication," it continues with

all the emphasis of uneasiness. The editor of the *American* in 1787 in announcing his discontinuance with the twelfth number had said, "Business will require the proprietor to leave the city immediately on the delivery of this number, and whether the most flourishing city in America will continue and support this periodical remains yet to be determined." The *Nightingale or A Melange de Literature*, Boston, 1796, in announcing a change in its policy piped a shrill key: "We are sanguine that a literary periodical can be supported in America. It has been suggested that the inhabitants of Boston prefer viewing the manifest of a ship's cargo to a lounge in the library. Let it not be said that in the pursuit of gain, Literature and the Muses are left at a distance, and that a sordid lust for gold has banished every noble sentiment, every mental delight from the bosoms of the avaricious Bostonians. God forbid that any foe to our country ever shall have reason to say that our native town is the residence of Ignorance, though it should be the emporium of Plutus!"

One is profoundly impressed with the sporting blood of the devoted band. They entered the arena and shouted smilingly, "We who are about to die salute you!" They bade their fellows godspeed and, later, a grim farewell. The *Massachusetts Magazine* said with its fourth volume: "Four years' experience has partly baffled the expectations of hope. The increase of subscriptions has unfortunately fallen below anticipation. Some part of the time alluded to another magazine received a degree of continuance in this State, and publications of a similar nature were fostered in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Nova Scotia, etc. Death though the destroyer of human hope often invigorates the confidence of the living. The *American Museum*, *Columbian Asylum*, *New Jersey Repository*, and *Nova Scotia Magazine* are now no more. Their passing shades move silently along and beckon the *Massachusetts Magazine* to follow. Fond of life and anticipating length of days,

she bids them a tender adieu and presses forward to the mark of the high calling of the Literati." Three years later its preface announces that it will go on in spite of difficulties. "As this is at present the only publication of the kind in the States, we fondly hope it will receive both literary and pecuniary assistance. Should it, however, finally share the fate of all other American publications of the kind, those who have been and still are interested in its success will have at least the satisfaction of reflecting that in comparison with the rest it died in a good old age." From 1789 to 1796, it was indeed a notable record.

## CHAPTER II

### THE MAKING OF THE BOSTON TRADITION

✓THE *Anthology* began life with an insouciance scarcely decorous in the future parent of the *North American Review*. It is mildly disquieting when large coming events refuse to cast their shadow before. You fear that the world may be after all but a random affair. In one way, however, it must be owned that a characteristic note was sounded. The cover announced, "Edited by Sylvanus Per Se." But sprightliness, not to say flippancy, awaited within. "Although we have the feeling of a parent for the publication before us, yet it may be proper to declare to the world that it is not indebted to us for birth nor was it born in our house. We knew neither its father nor its mother, nor hardly of its existence until naked, hungry, and helpless it was brought and laid at our door. In proportion as it engaged our care it won our affection. We shall give to our charge expensive advantages, in order to make him extensively and permanently useful." The "we" of this editorial later declared themselves to be "a society of gentlemen who have undertaken the publication merely for their own amusement and for the diffusion of literary taste, and they would be satisfied to defray expenses and have no desire for remuneration; the *Anthology* has never been a favourite with the public at large, nor were they ambitious of popularity, but the ablest pens of the country have praised them and their highest ideal is the pleasing consciousness of having done the State some service." This is well on in the fifth volume, however, and the Olympian accents of the future *North American* are now beginning to shape themselves.

The first volume of the *Monthly Anthology* and Boston



*Review* contained no such prescience. Though it had an air of saving something uncommon (proceeding perhaps from its professed indifference to remuneration) and printed occasional Latin poems, you might look in vain in the earlier numbers for any consciousness that it was a carrier of destiny. Indeed, it still pursued the pedestrian custom of publishing the month's marriages and births and deaths of the city of Boston. And although a translation of the Sanskrit *Sakuntala* ran through six numbers, still Matilda desired Mr. Editor to print the following verses, written by the intimate companion of her early years, of which — though they were not written to be published and she supposes will not bear criticising — she desires a fairer and more desirable copy than she can write herself. (Fancy asking the parent of the *North American Review* to become one's amanuensis!) Silviu has a regular department of literary and social chat (a cosiness which was sternly rebuked in the second generation); and there were the Literary Wanderer, The Remarker, The Family Physician, and The Botanist to buttonhole you monthly in a somewhat superior but still neighbourly fashion. Yet already, in the second volume, there was a faint premonition of that Nirvana which its enemies (soured New Yorkers) maliciously hinted that it had reached two-score years later. The editors dismissed the year with neither pride nor depression; the work had amused many idle hours; they have endeavoured to diffuse an undefiled taste; if they had been at times severe, it was because the disorders of American literature were to be cured only by the lancet. But they added an expression which by no stretch of the imagination can one picture the *North American* of the mid-century employing — “we have endeavoured to add to the general stock of innocent gaiety”; and, also, they had become worldly enough to confess satisfaction at seeing their subscribers doubled within the year. Like all the editors of our splendid-spirited early magazines, they took occasion of the increase of subscription to enlarge; and,

unlike the rest, they had by this time a concrete and specific object in addition to their wider public service. All the surplus was to be applied to the support and increase of a Public Library. There never was any surplus; in fact, the Anthology Club relinquished their publication at the end of the tenth volume, because the members felt that they could lose money to better advantage, but that did not prevent them from leaving another fine memorial of their civic conscience in the shape of the Boston Athenæum.

The *Anthology*, it is true, never quite achieved the rotund voice, the makings of which it bequeathed to the *North American*; but it is interesting to see the resonance gathering strength in their yearly addresses. And even in the beginning, it was thought sufficiently chesty by the *Emerald* — which had its high ideals also, for “though variety of subject was to be its sedulous endeavour, they always stood willing to sacrifice it to elegance of expression, chastity of thought, and value of information.” There now exists no literary paper but the *Anthology* in this place, it went on to say, and the gravity of its pages would claim little that could be suitable to those of the *Emerald*. The *Anthology* in 1811 would never have dreamed of returning to the vertiginosity of 1805. In that volume they regretted that while their predecessors had been uniformly favourites of the ladies, they received only frowns and neglect; but they had no intention of wooing the sex with love-tales or commentaries on fashion; or acrostics and rebuses; and furthermore their phizzes were too hopelessly ugly to be moulded into a simper or tortured into an ogle. Though patronage could be increased by making their work popular or insipid, they desire the praise only of those who relish manly thinking and manly literature. Volume four says that the *Review* is conducted under the conviction that public criticism upon writers for the public does not in itself imply either injustice or malevolence. “The respectable patronage now given the *Anthology* is sufficient to encourage their

perseverance; and they trust that the love of letters and art will increase with the growing wealth of the country, which fosters luxury unless restrained by literature and taste. We may this year offer strictures on different modes of education." From this last sentence it may be gathered that the gait of the *North American* — that of offering strictures — was now being struck. The sixth volume establishes the stride quite distinctly. "The facility with which the promises of editors are made at the present day is exceeded only by the indifference with which they are broken; so we will make no promises beyond hoping that the *Anthology* will yet be the repository of the sound literature of New England. We have found that some publishers and editors have not scrupled at altering English republications; and our reviewers will particularly be on their guard against such liberties." In the seventh volume the tone becomes slightly playful again, but it is the Johnsonian playfulness of the conscious dictator. "Seven years is a great age among the literary ephemera of this country, and we have arrived at this degree of maturity in spite of innumerable predictions to the contrary. We almost flatter ourselves that our constitution and temperament are more vigorous and that our uncommon duration is not accidental, but is the evidence of something sound in our stamina. We have been accused of depreciating our own country and everything indigenous. Owing to some glaring faults in our scheme of widespread superficial education, we are harassed with a class of authors more numerous here, in proportion, than in any other country — worthless weeds springing up prematurely, and their number is augmented by those who have mistaken virtuous patriotic sentiments for inspiration. These we have felt bound to contribute our efforts to eradicate."

This complaint, however justified at the period, is the badge of the high-toned. One cannot get so far back in literature that he fails altogether to hear that there is now a mob of gentlemen that write with ease. In Boston

even the *Royal American* had said in 1774, when, like all the other magazines, it was constantly calling for copy: "We all write nowadays, learned and unlearned; we write even though we cannot spell." The *Anthology* had often regretted that some persons of wit and sentiment of their acquaintance had not augmented their stock of entertainment or knowledge, and that it had to support itself on the unregulated contributions of a few literary men who were pleased with the public's profit or pleasure in their writings but who had no extraordinary stimulus to write. Though the broth was almost entirely their own, they always felt that too many cooks were having a hand in it. At last, in 1811, they made this announcement:

One of the greatest inconveniences we experience from month to month is that which arises from the want of an editor devoted to the work, whose literary reputation would in a measure be at stake. Hitherto the receipts of the *Anthology* have not enabled us to make such a provision. One of our number has voluntarily assumed the responsibility of seeing the work through the press; and when the materials have not been furnished to his hands, he has been obliged to make such hasty selections, in order to complete the number of pages, as his leisure amidst professional engagements would permit. For this evil we have hopes of a speedy remedy, and if our hopes are not disappointed, the *Anthology* will be placed under the peculiar care of a gentleman whose learning, talents and taste will enable him to make it all that its friends can desire.

This gentleman was apparently William Tudor, and it was he who, at the end of the tenth volume, merged it into the *North American*. Whatever the broth furnished by the first number of this, it was not spoiled by too many cooks, for Tudor wrote, with the exception of a poem, every one of its one hundred and fifty pages. Beginning life as a bi-monthly, it became a quarterly and then a monthly. Perhaps this youthful preoccupation with matters purely temporal is what prevents it now, in its old age, from classing itself with those magazines which take liberties with time throughout the year in order

to get two Christmases into December. During its very first year the editor, in answering a complaint of delay, begged his distant subscribers to recollect that the number does not appear until the middle of the month by which it is dated, and even later. At first the new *Americans* were like the old *Anthologies*. The departments of general intelligence were retained, and even the practice resumed of publishing those fascinating documents, meteorological tables. Yet, though there were occasional anecdotes, there were no chatty letters or social descriptions and very little poetry. This last was not the editor's fault, however, as he says he has been so seldom favoured with poetical offerings that he rejects any with some regret and hesitation, and later congratulates himself that the department of Original Poetry is growing. But the earlier volumes are marked by the gradual retirement of the editor from public confidences; and on the seventh volume by the rigid retirement of fact as well as fancy, in the suppression of the departments of Poetry and Intelligence. The former lasted long enough to get in that trivial piece of work *Thanatopsis*, but not for a long period was the *North American* to open its august doors to any other poetical prattle. Already the reviews were increasing in length and showed the tendency to group several books into an article of fifty pages or more on the British type, in which the books are but *corpora vilia* — sloven and unhandsome corpses which arouse the author's reflective remonstrance by coming between the wind and his nobility. Tudor, from the beginning, sought to emancipate the magazine from the somewhat Bostonian tone of its parent, although his efforts toward a general circulation were content with attempting to widen the material rather than the subscription list. "I tried to abstract myself," he wrote, "from the narrow prejudices of locality, however I might feel them." An article in the second volume lamented the literary delinquency of America and its dependence on England — we have not yet made an attempt toward a literature of our own, it

said. But Tudor, justly, wrote afterward, in his *Miscellanies*:

The *North American* certainly shows that there is a considerable stock of literature already accumulated in the country, when such a journal should have continued for several years increasing in value and preserving itself from the bigoted sway of any political or religious party.

Though Tudor reported growing patronage, the enterprise was supported by a club of gentlemen who sustained the same relation to it as had the Anthology Club to its monthly. For several years it was necessary for them to dip into their pockets at their regular suppers and dinners. In 1817 Jared Sparks, then a tutor at Harvard, wrote to a friend:

It will doubtless be strange news to you to hear that I have engaged to take charge of the *North American Review* after the next number, when Mr. Tudor resigns. A certain number of our most distinguished literary gentlemen have associated themselves and agreed to furnish articles in their turn, and it is on this condition only that I would engage in the affair.

The difficulties in the way of getting good articles and of holding up benevolent gentlemen to their own good intentions — says H. B. Adams in his *Life of Jared Sparks*, which contains the fullest and most documentary account of the early years of the magazine — began to dawn upon the young editor before his first number was ready. In 1819 Sparks went to Baltimore and was succeeded by Edward T. Channing, who resigned soon after to take a chair at Harvard (later editors found no difficulty in holding down the two chairs at once) and was followed by Edward Everett. Duyckinck says that Dana was in line for the editorship but was considered too unpopular, whereupon he resigned from the staff and left the club. The departure of Sparks to Baltimore was of great consequence to the magazine, for he performed even more valuable service for it when absent than when present. By his work among his new friends and his constant correspondence with Channing and

Everett he widened its influence and helped to make it our first approximation to a national magazine. When he returned in 1823 to conduct it again, it showed at once the effects of his wider horizon; and his first important articles were upon the colonisation movement and upon Baltimore. Furthermore, he had been industriously extending the subscription list all the while he was away and helping Channing and Everett to introduce business methods in circulating the magazine — something which Tudor had never even attempted. Once again editor, he employed better business agents and established many new local connections throughout the country, with the result that its circulation rapidly increased.

The North American Review Club, continues Adams, for several years controlled the policy of the magazine, both editorial and financial.

Edward Everett wrote Sparks in 1820: "The North American Club voted to ask you to write a paper." T. Parsons wrote Sparks in 1822: "I shall never write again for the *North American* without being paid for it, and the question of pay or not pay is now agitating the Club. None of the owners of the book work but Everett and you." Everett, who had rapidly conformed his magazine to the English type, wrote him frankly in 1821: "Your remark against its want of Americanism is just, but you must remember some things: First, you cannot pour anything out of the vessel but what is in it. I am obliged to depend on myself more than any other person, and I must write that which will run fastest. I am ashamed of this, but I cannot help it. Second, there is really a dearth of American topics: the American books are too poor to praise, and to abuse them will not do. Third, the people round here, our most numerous and oldest friends, have not the raging Americanism that reigns in your quarter." J. G. Palfrey wrote Sparks in 1823: "Everett informs us that he has informed you that he resigns the *North American* to you, on condition of your editing it in Boston, and on the same terms that he has done."

With the advent of Sparks came not only a far more substantial subscription list, but pay for the writers. This was uniformly one dollar a page, and no copy thrown in. "Every writer pays for his book like any other sub-

scriber," said Sparks. The remark illustrates not only the definiteness of the new business management, but the old idea that to see one's self in print was a solid compensation. It was an idea that persisted many years both with shaky and with stable magazines. But the new policy of paying their writers did not impede the magazine's success.

"For the last seven years," Sparks wrote Everett in 1828, "the work has increased in value about \$2,000 a year. I paid for it \$10,900. The first two years I had it I realised very little. I then sold a quarter of it to Mr. Gray [for \$4,000], with the agreement that he should have out of the proceeds \$1,100 a year as publisher and I \$2,200 a year as editor; and if anything remained, it was to be divided according to the respective value of our shares. The largest amount that I have ever received in a year was \$2,283 — this was my compensation as editor and for the interest on the amount of my share, three-quarters of the whole. The work was valued last May at \$20,705. If you are inclined to purchase one-quarter of it, you shall have it for \$5,000. I will then agree to receive as editor \$1,500, and Mr. Gray shall have \$1,100 as publisher. The surplus will be divided according to our respective shares, it being understood that I shall be paid for what I write at the same rate as yourself. The exact number of efficient subscribers I cannot tell. I doubt whether it is more than 3,200. We shall scarcely expect the same ratio of increase hereafter as heretofore. The new journals that have been set on foot, and with a considerable success, must in the nature of things, fill up some of the channels into which our work would otherwise run." Finally he sold his three-quarter interest to Alexander Everett, in 1830, for \$15,000. "I am not very light-hearted about it," he wrote to one of his friends. "But I have sold it for \$9,100 more than I gave for it; and during the six years that I owned it, I have actually realised from it \$22,000."

Prescott, who from 1821 to 1833 contributed annually an article to the magazine, came to the conclusion — says Ticknor — that criticising the works of others is all but worthless. Hence, the letter of his in 1837 may be slightly prejudiced. "The last number of the *North American* has found its way into our woods. I have only glanced at it, but it looks uncommonly weak and water-



ish. I suppose the paltry price the *North* pays (all it can bear, too, I believe) will not command the variety of contributions and from the highest sources, as with the English journals. For a' that, however, the old *North* is the best periodical we ever had or, considering its resources, are likely to have, for the present."

As Irving was our first writer to obtain success abroad, so the *North American* was our first magazine to obtain an international reputation. The *Edinburgh Review*, in noticing the Sketch Book, said:

It is the work of an American entirely bred and trained in that country; and it is the first American book, we rather think, of any description, but certainly the first purely literary production to which we could give the praise of being written throughout with the greatest care and accuracy, and worked up to great purity and beauty of diction on the model of the most elegant and polished of our native writers. The American genius has hitherto been defective in taste, certainly, rather than in talent. While we are upon the subject of American literature, we think ourselves called upon to state that we have lately received two numbers of the *North American Review*, or *Miscellaneous Journal*, published quarterly at Boston, which appears to us to be the best and most promising production of the press of that country that has ever come to our hands. It is written with great spirit, learning and ability, on a great variety of subjects; and abounds with profound and original discussions on the most interesting topics. Though abundantly patriotic, or rather national, there is nothing offensive or absolutely unreasonable in the tone of its politics; and no very reprehensible marks either of national partialities or antipathies. The style is generally good, though with considerable exceptions, and sins oftener from affectation than from ignorance. But the work is of a powerful and masculine character, and is decidedly superior to anything of the kind that existed in Europe twenty years ago. It is a proud thing for us to see Quarterly Reviews propagating bold truths and original speculations in all quarters of the world; and when we grow old and stupid ourselves, we hope still to be honoured in the talents and merits of those heirs of our principles and children of our example.

It is amusing to see that a little later, in 1826, Alexander Everett was writing Sparks from Madrid: "Properly

managed and followed up with spirit, it ought in time to take the place of the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly*, which are at present mostly job-work and have nearly lost the vital spark that made them popular." He added that he doubted whether the President of the United States had a higher trust to be accountable for than the editor of the *North American*. This has been a congenial view for many editors of the magazine in its admirable career since. But some people abroad derived from it, as Everett implied, their only notion of American affairs. In 1826 there was a regular sale of over one hundred copies a month in London and twelve copies in remote Calcutta. And it had already become as disturbing a factor in one quarter as a President. For in 1824 it received the first, and for many decades to come the only, distinction of the kind ever accorded to an American magazine — that of being prohibited. On account of its anti-Bourbon spirit, France would not allow it to cross her frontiers. How is this for the record of a ten-year-old magazine which some persons at home were calling unAmerican!

Reviewing its editors in its centenary number, the *North American* said that its great epochs were during the administration of Edward Everett, of his brother Alexander Everett, and of Lowell and Norton. Sparks had decidedly failed to equal his predecessor and its high reputation for strong and varied articles had fallen off, when in 1830 Alexander took it and for six years restored it to the level which his brother had established. With Dr. Palfrey in 1836 it became more distinctly a literary and historical publication, and almost entirely relinquished its political character. Before he gave up the reins to Professor Francis Bowen, the charger had become a steady-going hack, and almost all the important early contributors had passed beyond these voices. During the respectable and apathetic administration of these two, you would never have guessed, says the retrospect, that the most active minds in New England were in a state of

social and spiritual ferment. The grandfather's clock was ticking drowsily when Dr. Peabody entered the sanctum in 1853 and gave it a mild jolt. In his ten years he succeeded in coaxing the magazine out of the Harvard cloisters but did not venture to drive it as far as Main Street. In 1860 Lowell and Charles Eliot Norton laid reluctant hands upon it and jogged it more decidedly, but nevertheless with filial moderation. Lowell had written in 1848, "Bowen seems to regard me as the wit of his Review, and I must keep up my character if I die for it." This was about his article on Browning, for which, he said, "I shall get twenty odd dollars on All-Fools-Day." Longfellow noted that new life had been infused into the *North American* with the very first number under the new editors; and every writer noted that the magazine had departed from at least one of its cherished traditions, and was willing to pay more than one dollar a page. Norton purposed, gently but firmly, to achieve innovations. "There is opportunity now," he wrote to a friend, "to make the *North American* one of the means of developing the nation, of stimulating its better sense, of setting before it and holding up to it its own ideal — at least of securing expression for its clearest thought and most accurate scholarship."

Scudder in summing up Lowell's connection with the magazine writes:

It had for fifty years been the leading representative in America of dignified scholarship and literature. At times it had been spirited and aggressive, but for the most part it had stood for rather elegant leisure and a somewhat remote criticism. The publishers, hoping to reinstate it in authority, applied in 1863 to Lowell to take charge of it. He consented with Norton as his assistant. "You have heard," wrote he to Motley, "that Norton and I have undertaken to edit the *North American* — a rather Sisyphean job, you will say. It wanted three chief elements to make it successful. It wasn't thoroughly, that is, thickly and thinly loyal; it wasn't lively; and it had no particular opinions on any particular subject. It was an eminently safe periodical and accordingly was in great danger of running aground. It was an easy matter, of course, to

make it loyal—even to give it opinions (such as they were) but to make it alive is more difficult. Perhaps the day of the quarterlies is gone by, and those megatheria of letters may be in the mere course of nature withdrawing to their last swamps to die in peace. Anyhow, here we are with our megatherian on our hands, and we must strive to find out what will fill his huge belly, and keep him alive a little longer.”

Yet though its new editors attempted to widen the horizon of the magazine, and invited representative men from all over the country to write for it and even extended the invitation across the Atlantic, it still remained a somewhat local product. “In Cambridge where I went from Venice to live after a brief sojourn in New York,” says Mr. Howells, “one was, as it were, domesticated with the *North American*, for both the editors lived there, and one was orally asked to do this paper or that. And by and by when both Norton and Lowell went abroad, the editorship began to fluctuate from one scholarly Cambridge intelligence to another.” And in spite of innovations, it did not dream of bundling away its early nineteenth century ideal of the *Edinburgh*. When Longfellow looked over Cushing’s Index to the *North American*, he said, “It is like walking through a graveyard and reading the inscriptions on the graves. So many familiar names, so many old associations!” And Mr. Howells says that it “fondly realised its descent from the supreme English quarterlies. It emulated the look of these in size and shape, and if it had not the stiff covers, half of the thickness of pasteboard, which enabled them to hold themselves upright on a shelf, the grey of its outside was of a scholarly quiet, which richly satisfied.” Scholarly and dignified quiet was, however, ceasing to be the ideal elsewhere in America. Even religious periodicals had long since yielded to the literary demands of a democratic and busy age for brevity and briskness. “The *North American*,” said Dr. H. M. Field, “was like the English quarterlies which it copied, very respectable and very dull.” And spruce young worldly journals like the *Round Table* were

even more caustic. Having little space at its disposal, this paper naturally deemed brevity the soul of wit. It said in 1869:

We believe the quarterlies could be made more popular without losing a wit in dignity and character. At least two of the English quarterlies are now as eagerly looked for in cultivated circles as is the last number of the *Ledger* by fascinated scullions. The stupid Puritan fallacy that writing to be respectable must needs be dull has always affected most literary work in this country, and the quarterlies have perhaps borne heavier marks of it than other publications. Dreary essayists who could not get a hearing in other countries have in the much enduring columns of the quarterlies had their exceeding great reward in being called scholarly and profound by nodding sciolists whose cue it is to pretend to like being bored. Our quarterlies are almost the synonyms for dulness and provincial torpidity. The *North American*, admirable as have been some of their numbers in point of solidity, instructiveness and permanent value, has suffered in this particular. If it can but gather together a staff of writers who not only know things but know how to say them, it may have a future of national credit and importance.

Lowell himself seemed to feel how impossible it was for mortal man to live up to the Boston tradition and its palladium. In 1867 he wrote whimsically to Godkin: "'Tis the curse of an editor that he must be always right. Ah, when I am once out of the *North American Review*, won't I kick up my heels and be as ignorant as I please! But beware of omniscience. There is death in *that* pot, however it be with others." He had said it. The Boston Tradition and its chief embodiment was dying of its own omniscience. Until both consented not to know it all, the mechanics of life might still be present but animation was lacking. And that day was yet distant. But here, for the present, must we leave the sempiternal *North American* and turn to transitory things. They will come and pass and must be dealt with in their own place, but it will go on for all chapters.

"Conscious of inability, we dare not say that the flowers of the *Polyanthos* shall be all indigenous," ran

the announcement in 1806 of this small and chubby magazine of seventy-two pages, which might well have borrowed from New York of just a decade before the title of *The Lady and Gentleman's Pocket Magazine of Literary and Polite Amusement*. It paid much attention to the drama and the local theatre, and reviewed also the New York and Philadelphia companies. It is curious and instructive to note how eagerly the magazines seized upon the infant theatre as a topic likely to widen their appeal. At the beginning of the century President Dwight had written in *Travels in New England*: "When the first proposal was made to establish a theatre in this town, a considerable number of the inhabitants eagerly engaged in forwarding the design. Accordingly, a theatre was built, and soon after that another. There is reason to believe that the stage is now regarded with very general indifference. One of the theatres has already been taken down, and the other, it is said, is far from being crowded." The same year that saw the *Polyanthos* bud marked the introduction of the *Emerald*, which — Containing Sketches of the Manners, Morals, Amusements of the Age — flashed its corrective comment on the stage also. "The drama has become a public amusement of prime importance and there can be no doubt that much advantage will accrue from checking its absurdity and rewarding its merit." Thus, though President Dwight was doubtless stating a fact, doubtless also the wish was father to the deduction that the pulling down of the second theatre indicated that public interest in the stage was waning. Rather was it an illustration of the perennial habit which the theatre shares with the magazine of multiplying faster than the audience. The *Cabinet* in 1811 was at times almost a theatrical magazine, and showed that the exploitation of the theatre as a business had increased as well as the public interest. It devoted much space to George Frederic Cooke, who had just arrived after sixteen nights in New York, and took the occasion of some sharp practice in the matter of tickets to scold the Boston theatre

roundly. "The company is miserably deficient, the orchestra intolerable; the foreground of the stage is hardly illuminated sufficiently to discern the face of a performer the distance of four boxes from the scene, the smoke that arises from the most execrable oil makes matters worse and 'dims the ineffectual fire' of the side lights. The coldness of the house renders it dangerous for ladies to venture thither at all, much more to appear there dressed with taste, elegance and fashion. Nor are the boxes fit for their reception, being neither washed nor properly swept. The management, taking advantage of the anxiety to see Mr. Cooke, forced the public to purchase at an advanced price a ticket for a night he would not perform if they would get places for the nights he did." All the papers seemed to feel from the very start of their theatrical comment that correcting the players was a very ticklish matter; though it appears to have been genuinely appreciated that criticism of acting—even when the general level of criticism of all kinds was vituperative and personal—had fallen to disgraceful depths. There was also some wholesome fear that the truculent tribe would make a scene. Theatrical criticism, wrote J. F. Buckingham, always called down curses on the head of the author. In his magazine, the *Ordeal*, 1809, he tried to lift the business into a higher zone. "The conductors of the Theatrical Department will direct their remarks to the apparent taste of the public and the merit of the compositions rather than the defects of men and women, whose secondary intellect and capriciousness of passion would reduce the dignity of criticism to the clamorous ebullition of frivolous garrulity." This booming sentence was but the conventional editorial manner, for in his Memoirs he wrote quite humanly of his theatrical criticisms in the *Polyanthos*: "They are all my own. Some of them are severe, but I am not aware that any of them are unjust. Mr. Poe, the father of the late E. A. Poe, took offence at a remark on his wife's acting and called at my house to 'chastise my imper-

tinence,' but went away without effecting his purpose." Several times during his long and varied career, he notes similar calls and announces, perhaps with pardonable pride, similar results. In spite of several fracasés with both lawyers and actors, he went unlicked to a good citizen's grave.

The announcement of the *Ordeal* is interesting.

At a time when the crisis in our public affairs is so alarming as to threaten the very existence of the nation, it may well be enquired of the editors what result they can expect but failure. But the paramount necessity of securing our civil and political existence should unite all honest men in an ardent effort to exhibit to the *view of the people* the deformities which disgrace the present administration of government, by tearing away the curtain of hypocrisy under which they have long been concealed. The strong connection which subsists in all good governments between politics, religion, and literature inculcates the necessity of a like exposure of their absurdities. The office of the satirist, though ungrateful, is necessary; and satire will be one of the engines which the editors of this publication will employ to further their general design. Articles of serious discussion or general information shall have a general or implied local application. The department of Poetry in every literary journal in the United States has always been meagre of original stamina or support, particularly in respect to satirical effusions. As we shall have in view the censure of the ridiculous, as well as the approbation of the dignified, we shall frequently have recourse to foreign storehouses for weapons to overthrow the adversaries of good sense. We call on our poetical friends to help us scourge the absurd taste which prevails in the poetry of the times. None will be considered as subscribers but such as pay for one volume at the time of subscribing.

Here is a condensation of Buckingham's simple account of his splendid work for the city of Boston :

My first attempt to amuse, instruct and edify the public was the *Polyanthos*. The *ungrateful* or undiscerning public — notwithstanding my expressed flattery of their taste and confidence in their liberality — suffered it to wither and die at the end of twenty months. Yet the attempt ought to have succeeded. The engravings were not quite equal to those we meet now in magazines [1852], but they were the best that could be obtained. The portraits were accompanied with biographical notices,



The difficulty of obtaining either was discouraging, but I should have persevered if the subscription had been sufficient to pay the cost, without regarding my own labour. The suspension of the *Polyanthos* was a relief to my labour and an advantage to my pocket; for the publication produced not enough to pay the actual cost of paper, printing and engraving. Considering that it was the first attempt in Boston (if not in the United States) to publish a magazine with a regular series of portraits, I do not feel that there is reason to be ashamed of my labour — there have been many reasons to regret that I was foolish and improvident enough to make the experiment. In 1812 the publication was resumed and two volumes issued of the original size and form. These were succeeded by four volumes, octavo, the contents of similar character. The biography and theatrical criticism were still for the most part, and unless when otherwise acknowledged, my own. The *Ordeal* I began in 1809. The matter was chiefly political. The whole amount of subscriptions fell short of the expense, and it was discontinued at the end of six months.

I ventured in 1817 to issue a prospectus of the *New England Galaxy and Masonic Magazine*. Freemasonry was then in its palmy days, and this was the first periodical masonic paper. Notwithstanding the confident tone of my prospectus and salutatory address, it was not without doubt and misgivings that I proceeded in my undertaking. A wife and six children had no other resource than my labour; and all apparatus was to be got (if got at all) on credit, and of *that* I had none. (Mrs. Susanna Rowson was a highly valued correspondent.) I am myself accountable for all the trash "From the Shop of Pertinax Period and Co.," and every original article, the authorship of which is not acknowledged or indicated by a signature, was of my own manufacture. The *Galaxy*, as may be inferred from my address to its readers on the commencement of the second year, had not met with entire approbation. As the circulation increased, endeavours to stir up resentment against its freedom of remark were multiplied. Criticisms on the operations of the missionary societies, certain practices of the banks and brokers, public lecturers and itinerant preachers and instructors, and the proceedings of political caucuses received admonitory and threatening letters, mostly anonymous. In its fourth year the title *Masonic Magazine* was dropped, as it had proved one obstacle in the way of its general circulation, but the interests of the institution were still watched with fidelity. Our success was becoming substantial, when in 1822 a prosecution for libel — an occurrence which was to happen again four times, but from which I suffered only anxiety and vexation and some loss

of money — led to a modification of the common law of libel. Custom once imperiously, even tyrannically, imposed on editors an annual tax in the shape of a New Year's address. The task was always irksome from the difficulty of guiding thought to a new channel and of giving to an old and hackneyed sentiment new forms of expression. In 1828 I sold the *Galaxy* to Willard Phillips and Theophilus Parsons, having conducted it over eleven years, in order to devote my entire attention to the *Boston Daily Courier*.

The *New England Magazine* is Buckingham's finest monument in the magazine line. It was a publication admirable for its day, and containing for ours not only a wealth of indispensable historical material but a surprising amount of good literature. Articles were at first unsigned or signed only with initials. As time went on, some full names appeared; but the practice does not seem to have justified itself in the editor's mind. Buckingham began the magazine on account of his son, Edward. This young man immediately made sure of the support of several of the popular writers of the day, Edward Everett, Hildreth, Hilliard, Hannah Gould, Frothingham. But the persons who will now attract most attention — says George Willis Cooke in the second *New England Magazine*, which went to join its elder brother many years after — were then known but little or not at all. These were Longfellow, Whittier, Hawthorne, and Holmes. Two papers of the *Autocrat* appeared here, and the resumption of them in the *Atlantic* several decades later showed only a maturer mellowing of the same method. "The circulation has increased monthly," ran the announcement of the second volume, "though it is yet far from being a source of pecuniary profit. It was intended to embellish the magazine with a series of portraits, and this intention it has been impossible to fulfil. There is some difficulty in procuring original likenesses, and more in obtaining correct copies of originals. The fastidiousness of individuals in two or three instances has frustrated our design, but with all these discouragements the design will not be abandoned." The year saw the realisa-

tion of that hope, but the next year marked the extinction of another. In July, 1833, Edward Buckingham died. An editorial announcement paid him a dignified and touching tribute, and there was also a memorial poem. This is a striking instance of the real bonds which existed between the editors and the subscribers of the early magazines. "The *New England Magazine* was the offspring and the property of Edward Buckingham. In projecting the work, the idea of making money was no part of the consideration. The elder of the editors had previously had sufficient experience to enable him to feel how uncertain and delusive are all calculations of that sort. The other needed a chance for improvement in the pleasanter departments of literature. He for whom the magazine was created and by whom it existed is no more. The surviving editor feels that he cannot desert it now."

When he retired from the management, said Park Benjamin, the papers became less general and didactic, with the result of an increase in circulation. The new editors were Dr. S. G. Howe and D. O. Sargent, both of whom had been writing for its columns. Finally, at the request of the proprietors, Park Benjamin, who had been a constant contributor, became sole editor. The *New England* is the first magazine we have had occasion to chronicle which from the beginning paid its writers. At the end of its first year under the new management, it said to its contributors: "The remuneration which we have been able to extend is not, we are deeply conscious, commensurate with your deserts; but the terms of one dollar by the page of prose and double the sum for poetry, is all that the magazine can afford; and though lamentable the confession, we must own that even with these rates not one solitary penny is left to reward the editorial labour at the close of the year. With the extension of our subscription list, your compensation shall be increased to two — yes, three dollars a page; and even then we could wish it were more. We will look for our own reward in the consciousness of having done something

to encourage American literature." It is to be hoped that Dr. Howe still continued to pay himself for his articles, otherwise he would positively have lost money by assuming the editorial chair. All honour to the *New England!* In this, as in every other aspect of its professional activity, it set from the start a high standard. It is one of the few magazines in the long list whose untimely death may at this distance be genuinely regretted.

It was not long before Park Benjamin issued his valedictory. Although there were to be some years of fluctuation in the traffic, he may be called the first in the procession of editors and magazines heading toward New York.

It could not be expected that a journal affording very limited means of compensation to authors could attain a very high standard of excellence. [Note that no sooner had the practice begun than those rapacious writers started to bargain at once! Ten years before they had been glad to write for the good of the country and their own reputation.] It has presented from month to month the best papers from writers who were generously content with a very inadequate remuneration. Authors of celebrity, whose books are sure of a popular reward, are vainly solicited to waste their efforts in the pages of a monthly magazine. Could the American publishers afford, like the English, to pay handsomely for articles, we should soon see our journals assuming a different character and vying successfully with the best transatlantic productions. As the case stands, it is unfair to make comparisons between the light literature of Great Britain and the United States. There are few educated men in this country who can yield themselves to the pursuits of literature and the liberal studies. With the exception of those whom fortune has placed beyond the necessity of exertion, there are no authors by profession. When a poor man has attempted to live by scholarship, he has been compelled to seek a resource as instructor or lecturer or some such mind-wearying employment. I believe, however, that we shall soon see better days. The worth of literary labour is beginning to be appreciated. The magazine will hereafter be conducted under better auspices. It will be united with another work of a similar kind in New York, and be styled in future the *American Monthly Magazine*.

This proved to be, it is true, but one of the long, long

thoughts of a young man; yet, O Boston, Boston, how often in the years to come wert thou to hear from high places that westward the course of empire was taking its way! Now, however, all unconscious of the worst blow fate had in store for her — when the *North American*, cradled in her bosom, was to prove sharper than a serpent's tooth — she had set about, undaunted by the commercial clamours of New York and Philadelphia, the making of the Boston tradition.

Dr. Hale says the people of Boston took an interest in what we should now call idealistic or sentimental enterprises, such as was not paralleled in what he knew of other cities. In Boston, by a sort of natural law, the prophets of new beliefs and new superstitions made rendezvous. This local ferment, eager expectation, and readiness for new things did not characterise Boston at the beginning of the new century, and certainly, he adds, does not characterise it to-day.

A picturesque place where one who was wise enough might watch some of its currents, was the modest book-shop kept in a private house by Miss Elizabeth Peabody. Somehow or other she and her sisters — afterward Mrs. Horace Mann and Mrs. Nathaniel Hawthorne — opened a "foreign circulating library" in what was the front parlour. I am afraid that the subscription to the library and the sales of books did not amount to much. But what happened was this: If you had a vacant ten minutes you went in there, for it was just in the middle of the Boston of that time. Who was there that you did not meet who was wide-awake and interested in the future? Perhaps somebody told you that Margaret Fuller's conversation of that week would be on the myth of Juno or the myth of Ceres, and wouldn't you like to come round on Thursday evening? Or somebody said that thus-and-so would be going on in preparation for Brook Farm. If you had that ten minutes and looked in at 12 West Street, you were made sure, if you had not known it before, that this world had a future and that very probably it was true that the kingdom of God was at hand. I think the Brook Farm people all made their regular headquarters at the Foreign Circulating Library. I am afraid that the helter-skelter in which everybody availed himself of its hospitalities did not promote its pecuniary success,

This last sentence might have been written of the *Dial*, the publication which this eager idealistic band projected as the fountain-light of all their day. At no time in its four years did its subscription list reach three hundred names. Even the open-handed Miss Peabody, who was quite inured to such behaviour from the Boston intellectuals, complained at its being systematically loaned from house to house. Mr. F. B. Sanborn says it died of starvation, chiefly because it was ahead of the times; but, as Miss Peabody testified that it could have paid expenses with five hundred subscribers, it died evidently of the thrift of its admirers.

Mr. George Willis Cooke in the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* has written the most complete account of it. As early as 1835, he says, Emerson wrote of an "organ of a spiritual philosophy" which was to have been called the Transcendentalist, or the Spiritual Inquirer. He suggested to Carlyle, whom all his American enthusiasts were urging to settle in America, that he take the editorship. "We have some confidence," wrote Emerson (not remembering what plain livers were Boston's highest thinkers), "that it could be made to secure him a support." Out of the discussion over the proposed periodical grew several meetings of what came to be known as the Transcendentalist Club, a dozen people who desired a more spiritual interpretation of religion. The talk was large and leisurely and did not grow definite until 1839. Margaret Fuller was selected for editor, and the first issue was set for April, 1840. But only thirty subscribers had appeared by June. Nevertheless, in July the *Dial* essayed the outer air. The announcement ran:

We invite the attention of our countrymen to a new design. With some reluctance the present editors of this work have yielded themselves to the wishes of their friends, finding something sacred and not to be withstood in the importunity which urged the production of a Journal in a new spirit. Many sincere persons in New England reprobate that rigour of our conventions of religion and education which is turning us to stone, which renounces hope, which looks only backward, which

asks only such a future as the past, which suspects improvement and holds nothing so much in horror as new views and the dreams of youth. No one can converse much with different classes of society in New England without remarking the progress of a revolution. It is in every form a protest against usage and a search for principles. If our Journal share the impulse of the time, it cannot now prescribe its own course. It cannot foretell in orderly propositions what it shall attempt. Let it be one cheerful, rational voice amid the din of mourners and polemics.

The editors for the first two years were Ripley and Margaret Fuller. For her it was the principal event in that literary career of hers which somehow did not come off. Charles Taber Congdon thought, like every one else, that she considered her own opinion conclusive and a little resented any attempt to change it; and that she swayed all around her by sheer force of her royal intellect. She had physical peculiarities which were not pleasant, and even Emerson confessed that she repelled him upon first acquaintance. Later, Greeley wrote that he could never agree with his guest about diet or about tea, of which she drank great draughts. But arrogant and opinionated as Margaret was, she wrote Emerson on her withdrawal that his purpose would be to represent his own tastes and make a good periodical, while hers had rather been to let all kinds of people have freedom to say their say for better or for worse. And she proved right; for Emerson paid far more attention to merely good writing, and for the rest gave a voice only to those reforms he personally sympathised with. The first number, says Cooke, rather disappointed them all: Alcott wrote in his sententious way, "It measures not the meridian but the morning ray — the nations wait for the gnomon that shall mark the broad noon." And later he wrote, "A fit organ for such as myself is not yet, but is to be." Emerson contented himself with writing to Carlyle: "It is not much but it is better than anything we had." The intention had been to pay Margaret two hundred dollars for the editing, but the money did not materialise. As time went

on she found that her health would not bear the strain of teaching and editing at the same time; and she saw that it was in vain to hope any longer for a maintenance from the paper, so that she might devote herself to her pen. During the second year, too, the publishers failed; and it was only with difficulty that the editors secured the small subscription list. Miss Peabody then undertook the publishing, and even wrapped the numbers for mailing. She wrote Emerson that she would first pay the printer and then Margaret Fuller,—if after the latter had received three hundred a year there was any left, she would take the usual commission. But she succeeded, says Cooke, no better than “that rascally firm who were her predecessors.”

Emerson recorded in his diary: “I must settle the question, it seems, of its life or death. I wish it to live, but I do not wish to be its life, neither do I like to put it in the hands of the Humanity and Reform men, because they trample on letters and poetry; nor in the hands of scholars, for they are dead and dry.” Later he wrote Carlyle: “I had not the cruelty to kill it, and so must answer with my own proper care and nursing for its life. Perhaps it is a great folly in me, who have little adroitness in turning out work. Lately at New York, I found it to be to a certain class of men and women an object of tenderness and religion.” And yet it could not muster its five hundred subscribers! So all the thrift was not Bostonian — perhaps this coterie had a neighbourhood copy also. At the beginning of its third year, when Emerson took charge, its subscribers numbered only two hundred and twenty. Emerson’s early publisher, James Munroe, offered a better business management than it had hitherto received and smaller expenses by reason of its connection with his own firm; but as a year’s experience demonstrated that the expenses were greater and that the commission for his management would have been large enough even if they had been decreased, Emerson



managed it himself for two years. It seems to have cost him some hundreds of dollars.

Emerson as editor was much concerned not only with good literature, but with liveliness and variety. "W. E. Channing's Letters are very agreeable reading," he wrote to Thoreau, "and their wisdom lightened by a vivacity very rare in the *Dial*. I have a valuable manuscript — a sea-voyage — from a new hand, which is all clear, good sense, and I may make some of Lane's graver sheets give way for this honest story." Thoreau wrote to Emerson: "I think this is a noble number. It perspires thought and feeling. I can speak of it now a little like a foreigner [he had assisted Emerson in editing the paper in 1843]; and to me it is a long letter of encouragement and reproof, and no doubt it is so to many another in the land. So don't give up the ship." To such as accepted it at all, says Cooke, Transcendentalism came as a gospel; and the periodical was its voice. Emerson wrote Thoreau in 1843: "The *New Englander* from New Haven angrily affirms that the *Dial* is not as good as the Bible. By all these signs we infer that we make some figure in the literary world though we are not as yet encouraged by a swollen subscription list." In April, 1844, George William Curtis wrote to Dwight: "The *Dial* stops. Is it not like the going out of a star? Its place was so unique in our literature! All who wrote and sang for it were clothed in white garments; and the work itself so calm and collected, though springing from the same undimmed hope which furthers all our best reforms. But the intellectual worth of the times will be told in other ways, though the *Dial* no longer reports the progress of the day."

Curtis had appeared there for the first time; and so had Thoreau, Dwight, Cranch, and Dana. For all its writers it had been almost the first means of self-expression, whether like Emerson and Alcott they had appeared before or not. The fervour of the writers, their air of having something to say which outsiders could not appreciate, their unconcern for facts and literary laws — all

these things, says Cooke, made it an object of ridicule to those not in sympathy; and even to those who were, for Cranch and James Freeman Clarke in Louisville caricatured the extravagance and naïveté of the Orphic Sayings of Alcott, which were often as profound as they were absurd. "How surprised would some of these writers be," says Frothingham's Transcendentalism in New England, "if they should now in their prosaic days read what they wrote under the spell of that fine frenzy!" Much of his best writing in prose and verse Emerson contributed to its pages; and almost all its staff afterward won distinction and a few fame seemingly permanent. But in spite of their one hundred and thirty-six pages, Carlyle thought the numbers had too little body; and Brownson owned in the Boston *Quarterly*, while praising it highly, that it lacked manliness; and the Philistine press called it a chaos of obscurity and nonsense, while the religious press scented atheism. Perhaps Furness said the best thing about it when he wrote to Emerson in 1852: "I am attracted and repelled by all this talk and speculation about things unseen and unseeable. How continually does it degenerate into a wisdom of words, and how hard it is to keep humble and self-forgetting. It is a favourite idea of mine that the all-ministering Providence gives us these speculations and theology and religious forms, etc., etc., to occupy us and divert our attention from the work going on within us, which our self-conceit, if it meddles with it, is sure to spoil; just as we rattle a bunch of keys before a baby when it is being vaccinated."

Certainly, the *Dial* moved a large number of rare-fibred spirits to express themselves in intangible words, and perhaps one should be as philosophical about Transcendentalism as David Harum was about fleas — a certain amount is good for a dog, to keep him from brooding on the fact that he is a dog. There is no knowing how much of his fine mechanism Emerson would have meddled with otherwise.

## CHAPTER III

### BAKED BEANS AND BROWN BREAD

BOSTON and even Boston periodicals, however, were engaged in other things beside increasing her air-chambers for the production of a stentorian voice. Most Bostonians were employed in the more profitable business of making their living, and among its limited number of readers most were more concerned with enlivening their own existence than with what immortal thoughts they might bequeath to posterity.

Boston and New England, which later admitted her to be the centre she already considered herself, had achieved about twenty-six magazines in the eighteenth century, besides some so-called magazines which were in reality only newspapers. Of the magazines, three went down (if indeed they ever set sail beyond the prospectus) without leaving so much as a ripple; of those with a known voyage, thirteen hailed from Boston, one each from Worcester, New Haven, Concord, N. H., Bennington, Rutland, Fairhaven, Vt., and two from Hartford. Three were going at once in 1743, '86, '95, '96; two at once in 1744, '87, '89, '92, '93, '94, and 1800. Both Hartford and New Haven had confident expectations of becoming hubs themselves. It is perhaps unlikely that the other small towns had such glorified visions. But in those days of uncertain and impeded communication, they saw no reason why they should transport by stage-coach all of their divine draught from the fountain-head. Why not be their own Rebeccas and dip from their native well? "A number of gentlemen" of Middlebury, Vermont, published 1812-1817, a *Literary and Philosophical Repertory*. Doubtless, too, it was not to home-grown

vigour alone that we owe some of these magazines. Some of their editors must have pioneered from Boston, bearing their precious ointment along with their household goods.

Although he had little goods besides his youthful hose well-saved, such a man was Joseph Dennie. He helped to found at Walpole, New Hampshire, the *Farmer's Museum*, a magazine which soon became so popular that the little town had to provide it with a mail bag all to itself, to start it on its lengthy journey as far as Nova Scotia one way and Georgia the other. Dennie, born in 1768, had left Boston because the law could not support him. "There we behold a shoal of junior lawyers keeping vacant offices," said he, "mere barber-shops for chat which are never darkened by the shadow of clients,—who must seek a precarious support from the gaming table or else in mere desperation marry some girl of fortune and be carried home by her to a father's house. By accurate calculation I can live here one-third cheaper than in any part of Massachusetts, and men of learning in these wilds are rare. I cannot be respected in Boston or its environs while I am poor and while that poverty obliges me to wear a threadbare coat. Much stress is laid there on externals, and unless the guinea is expended at the tavern, unless the glossy vest is worn, characters however amiable and knowing are sedulously shunned." Nevertheless, he found that even in New Hampshire the farmers lived more peaceably than he could wish or settled their own disputes. He drifted into the church, which had been enchanted with his city accents and asked him to read the service and a sermon for them on Sunday, pledging him eighty pounds a year and to increase his salary for ten years until it was doubled. But, thus deflected for a moment, he was still intent on his early ambition to practise and to write. "The revenues of the Church in these infant Republics," he wrote, "are too scanty to allure from an avowedly lucrative profession"—which was quibbling, of course, not scribbling—"a young man whose ambition is daring." But while he

was elocutionising on Sunday to the delighted rustics, he was gaining some literary reputation also; and at last he collected his week-day diversions together and went to Boston to see if he could dispose of them. There he donned at once the glossy vest from which he had been divorced over long for a youngster of his elegant tastes, and immediately demonstrated that he had rightly guessed the passport to Boston society.

A publisher, crafty in other ways it turned out, seeing him the feasted darling of fashion, lured him to remain and start a magazine on half profits. It was represented that his share would be one hundred and fifty pounds a year. The magazine was the *Tablet* (1795), a miscellaneous paper devoted to Belles Lettres, three dollars per annum. "The favourite child," said Dennie, "after buffeting the billows of adverse fortune for thirteen short weeks, sickened and died. If I had been in possession of property, neither the waywardness of the times nor the dulness of the Bostonians would have repulsed the growth of my miscellany"—a sentence which might have been passed by *Spectator* itself. But the child had lived long enough to father the man, and he determined that literature should be his calling. Once more casting aside his brocaded vest, he set out for vestless parts. "In Walpole there was a press conducted by a young man, and I was determined to convince him that my pen could be useful. Without saying a syllable respecting a stipend, I gave him an essay on Wine and New Wine and called it the Lay Preacher. It had been objected to my earliest compositions that they were sprightly rather than moral. Accordingly, I thought I would exhibit truths in a plain dress to the common people." The *Farmer's Weekly Museum* was the paper, and he soon became such a successful editor of it that to its title was added the *Lay Preacher's Gazette*. So much attention did he attract to it that it was enabled to publish more original literary compositions than any magazine in the United States, and indeed was, in the number of them, not equalled for a great many years to

come. The publisher of Walpole proved more able to keep his word than the publisher of Boston, and paid him the extraordinary sum (in cold cash) of one hundred and ten pounds a year. This, combined with the ninety pounds which he picked up practising law, permitted him to don the glossy waistcoat again, before the ravished eyes of the Walpole farmers, who were as much charmed with his sartorial graces as had been the Charlestonian rustics with his elocution. It is sad to note, however, that he flowered seemingly at the expense of his root, for the publisher in a year or so went bankrupt. (Isaiah Thomas bought the paper and retained Dennie as editor) on the somewhat curtailed wardrobe of four hundred dollars a year. The paper is an excellent specimen of the tedious rhetorical juggling which was once the ideal of our early magazines of a certain type and which is now considered futile by all save college pegasuses stretching their wings. Pieces of "chaste humour" and "the choicest efforts of the American Muse," and a department Colon and Spondee were equally characteristic with the essays of the Lay Preacher. They made up the greatest bid for literary fame ever put forward by any New Hampshire village; and while Dennie remained there, Philadelphia and New York and Baltimore came knocking at its door, all applicants for the brilliant editor who was hiding the bushel under his candle. ✓✓✓✓

Boston had been for a quarter of a century relaxing its ascetic ideas, as became a growing port. Jean Pierre Brissot in 1788, had been somewhat surprised not to find it so *triste* as he had expected, and as for progressiveness it compared very favourably with cities at home. "You no longer meet here that Presbyterian austerity which interdicted all pleasures, even that of walking. Music, which their teachers formerly prescribed as a diabolic art, begins to make part of their education; in some houses you hear the piano-forte. They publish a magazine here, though the number of gazettes is very considerable. The multiplicity of gazettes proves the activity of commerce

and the taste for politics and news.] Yet commerce occupies all their ideas and absorbs all their speculations. Thus you find few estimable works and few authors. The expense of the first volume of the Memoirs of the Academy of this town is not yet recovered; it is two years since it appeared. You may judge that the arts, except those that respect navigation, do not receive much encouragement here. Let us not blame the Bostonians; they think of the useful before procuring to themselves the agreeable. Their streets are well illuminated at night; while many ancient cities of Europe containing proud monuments of art have never thought of preventing the fatal effects of nocturnal darkness."

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, President Dwight pronounced, in his unimpetuous accents, that Boston was in many ways a superior town. "This is the only large town within my knowledge in which schools have been formed into a system. The number of private schools is great. The literary societies are the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Antiquarian Society, Massachusetts Historical, Boston Literary Society, Massachusetts Agricultural, Boston Athenæum. [The Boston Style is a phrase proverbially used throughout a considerable part of this country to denote a florid, pompous manner of writing, and has been thought by persons at a distance to be the predominant Style of this region.] It cannot be denied that several publications written in this manner have issued from the press here, and for a time been much celebrated. Still it has never been true that this mode of writing was either general in this town or adopted by men of superior talents. The people in this town are distinguished by their attachment to literature. Their pecuniary contributions to this object have exceeded those of any city in this American Union. There are proportionately many more liberally educated men here than in New York, and far more than in any other town in America."

Yet Philadelphia loudly pooh-poohed such claims.

The prospectus of a magazine in 1800 moved a gentleman of Philadelphia to utter this withering paragraph. "Literary projects have almost always proved abortive in Boston. Many attempts have been made to establish periodical works in that small town; but miscellaneous readers ask in vain for a magazine or a review or a literary journal in the capital of New England. The poverty of the inhabitants is the probable cause of the deficiency. But the hopes of authors like the desires of lovers are not easily extinguished; and a Mr. Hawkins, in the sanguine spirit of a projector, adventures to expose himself in the cold clemency of a commercial port. He proposes the publication of a Monthly Magazine entitled the *Columbian Phenix*. But from the dust and ashes of its predecessor this Columbian Soarer will hardly arise. The Bostonians will probably prefer as usual, the perusal of some of their meagre and time-serving newspapers, or rather that informing and witting work called an advertisement."

The spiteful prediction proved true. The *Columbian Phenix* and *Boston Review*, Forming a Compendium of the Present State of Society, lived through one subscription, and the editor did not call upon his personal friends for another. These, he said, had been largely responsible for the first, and the man of business and the miscellaneous reader whom he had hoped to attract never came. Nevertheless, this faraway Mr. Hawkins must have pursued his even tenor philosophically. He announced that he had lived long enough to know that the editor who does not promote the ambitions of individuals, flatter their pride and avarice or gratify their hate, finds in general but scanty support; and experience had shown him that a man to derive pecuniary reward from his talents must pamper the vices and follies of mankind. But he had — whether for publication or otherwise — none of the contempt for Boston which his brother editor in Philadelphia had, whether professionally or otherwise. The reason why works of taste were so little supported in



America, was not due to poverty or stupidity but to circumstances peculiar to a young, growing nation. Yet there is a critical period between infancy and manhood in nations as well as individuals. "Whatever we have done in agriculture, in commerce, in politics, and in war; in the belles-lettres we have not yet passed this period. Literature, well or ill-conducted, is the great engine by which all civilised states must ultimately be supported or overthrown."

The *New England Quarterly* (1802) echoed and reinforced this last statement. In a republic ignorance is the worst of evils. New England had now stored up a great deal of fat and it was high time she began to live upon it. "Although the literary periodicals which have lately issued from the Boston presses have been from various causes discontinued, the editors conceive that the inhabitants of New England are willing and able to support a magazine. Massachusetts and the neighbouring states do not compose the Bœotia of America. What has prevented literary publications from receiving merited encouragement is not the dulness of the Public but its pursuits and habits. Business and Politics have engrossed most of their time; and during an interesting European War in which each of the belligerent parties have wanted the commercial assistance of our neutral and fertile nation and each has had its partisans among our citizens, it could not be expected that the silent charms of literature would attract the attention of our merchants and politicians. The late war in Europe while it has drawn our attention from scientific pursuits has brought sufficient affluence into our country, to enable it to rise to a higher grade in the scale of national literature. But is New England to be engaged solely in agriculture and commerce? Are we to resemble Thebans and Dutchmen? Let it not be said that New England which is superior to other parts of the United States in other points of comparison, is inferior in the most honourable respect, in literature and arts and the sciences."

During the three years run of the *Boston Weekly Magazine* begun in 1802, it was honoured, says the valedictory, "by upwards of fourteen thousand subscribers of the most respectable characters in town and in all parts of the country." There, the business office appears to have been unusually active. The first number was sent out to the inhabitants of Boston gratis, with the announcement that the second would be delivered only to those who "have signified a desire to encourage this infant establishment" at a subscription price of two dollars per annum. As if conscious that already was gathering in the town that body of august voices which, practising its vocalisation in the *Anthology*, was finally to trumpet its basso profundo in the *North American*, it sought while there was yet time to cultivate the less resounding chords.

The magazine's motto was a blithe one, "To Soar aloft on fancy's wing, and bathe in Heliconia's Spring; Cull every flower with careful hand, and strew them o'er our native land." This challenge of the Elysian Fields to high Olympus was again flashed by the *Emerald* in 1806. For only two years did this periodical protest the growing gravity of the *Anthology*. It announced itself as Containing Sketches of the Manners, Morals and Amusements of the Age. We think the town, it said, wants to be weeded of over-grown absurdity and folly and extravagance; and like all such culturists from *Spectator* days down, it took care not to weed too unremittingly lest it find its occupation gone. One of its editorials in 1807 is of interest as showing that the making of magazines remained for many years the chief artistic activity of America. "Architecture is in some little degree advanced, but painting scarcely finds an amateur, and sculpture is almost unknown. Yet it is not correct to attribute an entire disregard to literature to the citizens of the United States. Though the national literary character stands not on the magnitude of individual exertion, it points to the community at large for that general good sense and correct information which gives respectability

to all and eminence only to a few. It is in conformity with general sentiments that periodical publications, with various merits and success, have been numerous in the United States." Indeed, but for these the country might have been accused of that insensibility to literary appeal which editors were always uneasily denying — more in the hopeful salutatory, it is true, than in bidding farewell to their hardly shepherded flock. "Cold neglect has so frequently chilled the aroma of literary ambition," said the *Cabinet*, A Repository of Polite Literature, in 1811, "that you may well ask why is another publication announced in Boston." This periodical devoted much space to the drama, and sought to elevate it into a fashionable function, freed from vulgarity. Of the eighteen magazines listed by Isaiah Thomas in 1810, seven are of Boston, and of these two are religious. The rest with the exception of the *Anthology* and the *Bibliothèque Portraitive* are of a lighter nature — the *Omnium Gatherum*, the *Mirror*, and *Something*. The names of the last three are sufficiently indicative of the casual quality of their contents.

Boston literary producers seem to have been grouped into two camps, the High-brows and the Low. The activities of the former were absorbed by the *Anthology* and the religious periodicals. The Anthology Club was composed of Liberal Congregationalists who were on the road to Unitarianism, and of equally high-thinking laymen; and it was their magazine which focused, if it did not establish, the close Boston connection between religious and critical literature which linked the two in Boston periodicals for more than half a century. This, with the historical and scientific spirits who had begun early to group themselves into societies, formed the basis for that air of self-conscious distinction which even at the beginning of the century had become known as the Boston culture. In 1876, Holmes wrote to Lowell: "We Boston people are so bright and wide-awake and have really been so much in advance of our fellow-bar-

barians with our *Monthly Anthologies* and *Atlantic Monthlies* and *North American Reviews*, that we have been in danger of thinking our local scale was the absolute one of excellence — forgetting that 212 Fahrenheit is but 100 Centigrade.” But if Lowell, himself, stood in some need of the roguish warning in 1876, no brahmin in the first decade of the century ever dreamed of measuring either hot air or cold by any other than the local thermometer. Boston, too, was naturally the place where the young plants from the Harvard nursery across the river, first unfolded their green shoots to the atmosphere of the outer world. It was an atmosphere scarcely less artificial than the academic one — the college youth merely continued across the Charles their philosophic and bookish discussions and their college ideals and pedantic playfulness, made scarcely aware in their passage that they had crossed a rubicon.

In 1820, from February to July, some of these youths printed in Boston an elegant little magazine called the *Club-Room*. It was a debonnair pamphlet decidedly composed for the cognoscenti. Among those who wrote its unsigned articles were Prescott, Edward Everett, Warren, Gardiner, Parsons, Dexter, Ware. It was Prescott who had suggested making into a periodical the papers which had been read at their club. The price of this elegant little pamphlet was forty-five cents. Its culture was fairly represented by one of its moments of stately unbending — a Latin poem entitled *Julietta-Romeoni* and the introduction which went with it. “Club begs to apologise to his fair readers for putting on these pedantic airs and assures them he deliberated no less than five minutes upon the expediency of talking Latin or of leaving the pages wholly blank. He was finally determined by the consideration, that to the greater part of the sex, one would be quite as acceptable as the other — while to those young ladies in training for Blue-Stockings, the former would be of manifest advantage as a finish to their educa-

tion in teaching them to construe Latin and compose love-letters at the same time."

Longfellow was one of those youths who was writing for the magazines even while at college. The *American Monthly* of Philadelphia had printed some of his prose and promised him an honorarium which he never got. He turned hopefully to an editor nearer home — Theophilus Parsons, who conducted the semi-monthly *United States Literary Gazette* begun in April, 1824 — but apparently he was not, for his earlier contributions, even promised an honorarium (word redolent of a high-class distinction, conveying the delicate discrimination genteel ladies observe between boarders and paying guests!). He seems to have published several poems there before he took the bull by the horns when he sent another batch. Then Parsons wrote him: "In reply to the question attached to them, I can only say that almost all the poetry we print is sent us *gratis*, and that we have no general rule or measure of repayment. But the beauty of your poetry makes me wish to obtain your regular aid. Would you be kind enough to let me know what mode or amount of compensation you desire? For the prose we publish we pay one dollar a column. Perhaps the best course will be for you to supply me for a few numbers with both prose and poetry. For all that is used you shall receive a compensation which you shall think adequate. . . . The *North American Review* does not seek for novelties so much as a *Gazette* must." The next year, the new editor, Mr. Carter, begged with due compliments a continuance of contributions and hoped at no distant day to adopt the *Edinburgh Review* price of a guinea a page, and promised to "be as agreeable as possible." He said he had made arrangements with Mr. Percival to contribute a stated amount regularly, "if he does not disappoint us as poets sometimes do. We shall then bring the two American poets, as some of the newspapers call Bryant and Percival, side by side. I think you had better let us

have *three* American poets." It is interesting to observe that, on the scale of Longfellow's necessary expenditure at college, a remuneration of one dollar a close column from a semi-monthly which wanted him to write regularly, was not bad. In 1825, the Library of Harvard College cost the students just that sum per quarter, room-rent was from thirty to fifty dollars a year, and board from two to three dollars a week — his total expenses for one year, he said, could be fairly calculated at one hundred and eighty-four dollars. Thus, had the publishers of the *Literary Gazette* made the same arrangement with him as with Bryant, he could more than have paid his way through the college year. Bryant had told Judge Parsons, when asked to name the remuneration he expected, that he wanted two dollars apiece for his poems; but Cummings and Hilliard so appreciated him as a contributor, that they offered him two hundred dollars a year for an average of one hundred lines a month. (His profits on his first book were not quite fifteen dollars!) The periodical took Bryant's entire output during his most prolific years, says Godwin. Never before had so many good poems been contributed to one periodical in so limited a space of time, he goes on, and their poetry attracted so much attention that a volume was made of it, which the *North American Review* pronounced a signal event in our literary history. From 1823 to 1825 continued the *United States Literary Gazette*, its terms five dollars a year. It aimed to be bright and good but not too much so for human nature's semi-monthly partaking. It said, with a side glance at the *North American Review*: "Our numbers shall not be filled with literary gossip, or articles which are not to be understood and appreciated but with a degree of labour almost equal to that required for their composition. We have long seen and felt the need of such a work. We shall try to communicate a distinct and accurate impression of the literary and intellectual condition and progress of this country. No existing journal performs the uses

of a General Review; it will be a leading principle of the *Gazette* to maintain this character, and to make it *strictly national*."

This was another of the attempts to secure a place between the larger Reviews and the more ephemeral productions of the day, which were for many years to engage vainly the efforts of those Bostonians who wanted to hear what was going on in the intellectual world without being plunged anew, at the critical mention of every book, into multitudinous seas of words upon the development of the subject from the dawn of history or into the evolution of civilisation in general and of the subject often not even in particular. If one looked for a criticism of a new work in the *North American*, he found mostly prolegomena and olla podrida; and a word to the wise was considered insufficient. Even the dignified and competent *Journal of Philosophy and the Arts* (1823-24), though far less exhibitionistic, had made little attempt to meet the more mundane half way. Nor did it specialise on literature. Its function was to show the progress of discovery in the sciences and the fine and useful arts in Europe and America. It hoped, in beginning on the second volume, that as Boston had herself almost met the expenses of the first, it might attract in the future some attention at a distance, although it had hitherto failed to do so. The greater Boston had not yet begun, however, and a magazine with so solid an appeal did not secure beyond her borders the support it had hoped. More successful in this respect, was the *Boston Monthly*, begun the following year, 1825; but the brahmins, always distrustful of mere entertainment however high, may have slighted it at home, for it soon disappeared. Its announcement was attractive; it sought to be a vehicle chiefly for the diffusion of the products of our own minds. "We warn away those who cannot relish home-made bread and good roast beef, now and then a piece of stall-fed, with a plumb-pudding ornamented with a fresh plucked rose. On the table will be found no

stewed lampyres, fried mushrooms, fricasseed coots and wild fowl whose exquisite flavour arises from the process of decay. We will not be as grave as Quakers, but among our correspondents shall number no Lady Snearwells. Being long easier to purchase literature than to raise or manufacture it, we became acquainted with every little tell-tale writer of England while our own native talent was neglected. It requires only the genial ray of a just and liberal patronage to bring it forth and make it flourish. But as to our own immediate affairs — it must be distinctly understood that we cannot pursue our own labours without a prompt remuneration for them; and the expenses of our establishment are not trivial. Our principal reliance for the first year was on Boston; but we are happy to state we have found numerous friends throughout the Commonwealth. We must pay a passing compliment to Maine, who has been generous in her subscriptions and liberal in her communications. She has a reading community."

There are several allusions in the magazines of the decade to the unexpected intellectual awakening of Maine. One speculates if it were symptomatic of the growing taste for the forbidden fruits of another unpuritanical pursuit. Samuel Longfellow notes in the life of his brother that in 1820 the natives of Portland exhibited that dexterity in evading prohibitions for which they have since become famous. Theatrical performances being against the law, the sporting element of the staid little town achieved a masterpiece worthy of the generation which had been brought up on the canny slogan Trust in God but keep your powder dry. At a concert of vocal and instrumental music, there were played between the parts gratis, a three act play called *The Point of Honor*, and the three act farce *Katherine and Petruccio*. Boston, herself, — so soon to form the avuncular habit of escorting the younger generation to the circus for educational purposes merely — was to establish its best-supported theatre by a similar device, and lure the



devout beyond the stuffed birds of the spacious lobby of the Boston Museum into the perilous precincts beyond. There are people still alive whose parents took them as children to the Museum when they would never have dreamed of going to any other theatre from which the devil had not been exorcised. Stuffy vestibule of the Boston Museum, with your mouldy and dingy cases of commonplace curios to be encountered in many a shop window in the streets outside, what a symbol of the pleasing hypocrisies of Puritanism you lived to become! Boston culture was many years, however, in hitting upon some justification for reading merely for pleasure. [For many years no magazine tainted with mere entertainment could gain a permanent foothold in Boston.] Gazettes might so disport themselves without sin, but a monthly journal, never! Neither culture nor religious controversy left her reading public any time for such low pursuits; and both were to look askance — the former ruefully and the latter bitterly — upon the sprightly Dr. Holmes, when ten years later he frittered away talents which might have been directed to the good of humanity in his two instalments of the Autocrat of the Breakfast Table for the *New England*. Holmes, securely set within the circle of the elect, might have leavened Boston in spite of herself, but for his long absence from the periodical field. In 1834 he wrote to John Sargent from Paris that his medical studies prevented him from contributing to the magazine. To another he wrote, "I have entirely relinquished the business of writing for journals." A half dozen years after he left college, he practically laid down his pen. When he took it up again for the *Atlantic Monthly*, he found that Boston had got rid of enough of its literary snobbishness to treat entertaining trifles with tolerance, but he still encountered opposition from the religious branch of cultured readers, who accused him of lending a lofty name to vicious relaxations of thought.

But even to Holmes in his youthful days, there clung some of the Boston notion of showy swagger to any

public print which chattered brightly about matters frankly unedifying. In 1828 he wrote: "I have seen and read a good many numbers of the *Yankee*, and certainly it is an entertaining paper. 'I' is a man of some talent but you cannot deny that he is one of the most egotistical, impudent, conceited fellows that ever lived. Indeed, I believe that his paper owes half its popularity to the singular audacity and effrontery of its editor." How were young men to maintain the well-known Boston supremacy if they were not nurtured on deep draughts of ambrosia? Had the adolescent Holmes never been convinced of the Boston supremacy at home, he blushing owned it abroad. From Paris in 1834, he wrote, "If I should class the young men who have been out here from our three great cities, I should say that I consider that Boston went first, Philadelphia second, and after a long, long interval comes limping in New York." Yet already had the Boston *Literary Gazette*, praised though it had been by the *North American*, been obliged to amalgamate with the New York *Literary Gazette* in order to exist; and soon there were to be amalgamations which, as in the *New England* itself, even removed the editorial chair from the sacred city. The *New England*, little dreaming that its day of ignominy was already fixed, conceded the superior mountain peaks of the Knickerbocker school, but serenely maintained that in Boston a higher level of culture was diffused than elsewhere to be found in America. This was probably true for the scanty audience of her magazines and the general average of their contributions; and had not most of her brightest minds been feverishly engaged in religious controversy, there would probably have been much less disparity in the mountain ranges also. But souls desperately engaged amid many claimants in reading their title clear to heavenly mansions, had little eyes for the innocent brightness of the new-born day. Thus, in spite of many attempts to produce a lighter and more miscellaneous journal, the *North American* still remained the only lasting monument of a

strictly literary type; and though Boston was endearingly termed the Literary Emporium by fond youngsters, it bought precious little of their wares.

Meantime, too, the meagre audience for a less exalted literature was lessened by a succession of reprint periodicals. The *Atheneum or Spirit of the English Magazines*, 1825, published forty pages twice a month. The reprint magazines then and later could always make out a good case for themselves. "The articles of the *Atheneum* are not the first feeble efforts of young and inexperienced writers but are by men of cultivated intellect. Although, therefore, we cannot recommend our work to public patronage as a production of American writers and on *that* ground claim a support from the *patriotism* of the community, we can recommend it as a production of writers whose location in another part of the world is not a sufficient objection to their writings as long as they possess a quality of such paramount importance as that of *intrinsic merit*. We are by no means unfavourable to 'the encouraging and patronising of American genius' but we do not think in order to do this it is necessary to banish from the country all except American works." This magazine ran for four years, and was succeeded by the *Banished Briton and Neptunian*, by the *Anglo-American*, and by other reprints which in spite of their wide choice in material and its inexpensiveness, could not maintain themselves until in 1844, E. Littell started the *Living Age*, which struck an enduring root. Its fruitage upon our library shelves occupies more space than any other magazine but the *North American*.

These magazines provoked indignant though impersonal rejoinders from the "patriotic" periodicals; but they could afford the luxury of dignified silence as they saw the home-born products struggle each through a year or two and die at last of starvation. Some publications sought to take the middle ground which *Harpers* held so successfully two decades later and which both the *Atlantic* and the *Century* began to take but immedi-

ately forsook as no longer necessary to their success. They tried to maintain an American character while availing themselves of English material. Interesting for this reason and others, is the announcement of the *American Magazine of Useful and Entertaining Knowledge*, in 1834. "During the last few years the increase and multiplication of magazines and periodicals of every character has been without a parallel. Yet some of them are strikingly defective in one respect — the subjects of which they treat are almost exclusively of foreign growth, and on that account alone, of little or no value to nine-tenths of their readers. The object of the *American Magazine* shall be to correct this defect and *describe subjects, scenes, places, and persons to be found in our own fine and native country.* It has appeared to us strange that such a work has not been heretofore undertaken. We shall not exclude anything valuable of European origin, but the work shall be professedly on American subjects. The engravings with which the work shall be embellished will be of the first order. Several of the gentlemen interested in the magazine are themselves engravers and have contributed in no small degree to bring that beautiful though long-neglected art to the high point of perfection which it has attained in this country." The *American* was profusely illustrated, to be sure, but with architectural and zoological and statistical subjects rather than with those of artistic intention; yet it very well fulfilled its purpose to present native topics and is a mine of interesting material.

With the *American Monthly*, 1829, entered into Boston life one of our most showy literary figures and one who remained for fifteen years the most popular in America, and was until his death our best-paid magazinist. "When the picturesque Willis was a young and already famous man," says Holmes, "he was something between a remembrance of Count D'Orsay and an anticipation of Oscar Wilde. Lowell was a schoolboy, Emerson unheard of, Longfellow not yet conspicuous, and Whittier just

beginning to make his way against writers better educated." Not so dashing and splendid a personality as he was shortly to become after he had received the London hall-mark, young Willis was still quite a blade when he set up an editorial chair in Boston just two years after his sober father had begun there that most successful and long-lived of young people's periodicals, the *Youth's Companion*. From boyhood he had been successful. A classmate of his at New Haven, quotes Mr. H. A. Beers in his Life, testifies that he had taken while at college many prizes in outside literary competitions. "It was then customary for the editors of weekly and monthly periodicals who ordinarily paid their contributors nothing, to stimulate Columbia's infant muse by an annual burst of generosity in the shape of a prize for the best poem they had printed during the year." When he came to Boston from New Haven, he was both Jack and Master of all literary trades. "The editor is a young man," he announced with that competent briskness and cosmopolitanism of tone which stayed by him through life, "but he trusts that with the promised assistance of several able writers and an entire devotion on his part, the *Monthly* may be found worthy of the patronage it solicits. The *Monthly* is intended to resemble as nearly as possible the London *New Monthly* edited by Thomas Campbell. There is a call for a magazine of the literary character it proposes. The two leading Reviews of this country are published but seldom and are confined to the heavier branches of literature and science; and though there are lighter periodicals of very considerable merit, there is a wide interval between the two. Payment in advance (\$5.00 a year) is required for the following reasons. The expenses of a new establishment make it desirable and proper. In Europe periodical works are paid for either in advance or when each number is taken. This practice is fast gaining in America, and it is hoped may become universal. In that case, the little debts which are so often troublesome to subscribers, and so discourag-

ing and sometimes ruinous to publishers, are not suffered to exist." Among the several able writers who had promised assistance were young Appleton and Motley, both students at Harvard; and the devotion he himself promised he made good at the rate of from thirty to forty pages every month of tales, essays, and reviews. Although he said he was the only editor in the country who paid anything for verse, he announced that he could not pay as much as the English magazines for contributions. "The difficulty of transmission over such an immense country and the comparatively small proportion of literary readers limit our circulation to a thousand or two at the farthest." But literary Boston, though mildly captivated by this engaging person, was not in the habit of paying in advance or even taking single copies regularly on such hard terms; and after two years and a half Willis shook the dust of the ungrateful town from his shoes and made tracks for New York with his magazine, which he amalgamated with the New York *Mirror* in 1831. "The mines of Golconda," he said afterwards, "would not tempt me to return and live in Boston." When he resumed his editorial work in New York, he had learned that the way to keep a publication alive was not to pay "not much" but to pay nothing at all, except to his own editorial staff; and he said so with the utmost frankness. The circulation of New York magazines like those of Boston was largely local, but those Bostonians who stumbled across the *Mirror* must have comforted themselves for their growing fear of metropolitan eminence by the consoling thought that it was reflecting many of its editor's articles which had first seen light in their own *American Monthly*.

Willis in his large amount of writing for the Boston magazine had contributed to it a social smartness and fashionable tone which, when he specialised on polite subjects in his New York publications, soon gained him recognition as arbiter of elegance. After a decade of the usual failures to float light-reading in Boston, was projected a magazine which frankly styled itself a Reposi-

tory of Literature and Fashion, in the endeavour to capture some of the phenomenal success of *Godeys* in Philadelphia,— which might, indeed, have stolen from Boston the source of its success,— Mrs. Hale, once editor of the *Ladies Magazine*. This new periodical was the *Boston Miscellany*, edited by Nathan Hale, Junior. It scandalised the academicians by featuring fashions as well as literature. This, of course, was nothing new, but Boston cared to feel — in spite of ample demonstration to the contrary — that she had outgrown the necessities of her Colonial literary struggles. Yet even the *Athenaeum* which got all its material for nothing and charged five dollars a year, had helped itself along with coloured fashion-plates as well as engravings. Nathan raged at the ignominious clog of fashions which dangled from the hind leg of his soaring steed, yet it is probable that on account of it his Pegasus was permitted to continue its flight to the middle of the second year. The son of a literary family, he started out with high ideals. "Who is that Hale Jr. that sent me the *Boston Miscellany*?" Mrs. Stowe wrote to her husband from Cincinnati, "and will he keep his word with me? His offers are very liberal — twenty dollars for three pages of not very close print. Is he to be depended on? If so, it is the best offer I have received yet." Lowell got fifteen dollars a poem from it when Graham was paying him ten. Edward Everett Hale upon it and his father's *Monthly Review* with occasional nibbles of the *North American*, sharpened his literary eye-teeth. "When I left college, Dr. Palfrey asked me, very kindly, to furnish some articles for the *North American*, which he then edited; and these must be my first magazine articles. In January, 1841, my father began the publication of the *Monthly Chronicle of Events, Discoveries, Improvements and Opinions* and continued it for three years. In the end of '41 my brother Nathan was made editor of the *Boston Miscellany* and I was a sort of Man Friday on his staff also. Short stories, proof sheets, an occasional poem

written up to the one engraving of the month — every thing I was called on to lay a hand to and did as well as I could." The announcement of the paper struck a somewhat high and vague note. "Of the large demand in our country for an elegant literature, the number and circulation of the already established magazines furnishes at least some indication. It is a late day to undertake any defence of what is called light-reading — it has defended itself. It needs no wild belief in the glories or the truth of the ideal at the expense of the real to bid us enjoy and cultivate an acquaintance with artificial lives." For the latter part of the community it intended to have two copper-plates a number, a coloured page of Paris Fashions, and a piece of music. Neatly bridging the chasm between the paying artificial and the unprofitable ideal were such signed contributors as Lowell, Edward Everett, C. F. Hoffman, W. W. Story, T. W. Parsons, N. P. Willis, Fields, Hawthorne, and Poe. Lowell wrote many poems in by no means his lightest vein and contributed some critical work which would have been caviar to any miscellany whatever, to say nothing of one which eschewed the scholar's midnight lamp. "The appearance of an article on the Old English Dramatists in a Miscellany of Literature and Fashion," said that journal, "seems at first sight as much out of place as Thor's hammer among a set of jeweller's tools or Roland's two-handed sword on the thigh of a volunteer captain on parade day." Lowell himself seems to have felt its incongruity and regarded the appearance of the criticisms mainly as a cheap and convenient way of reprinting the best scenes and passages. In November, 1841, he wrote: "The magazine is published this morning. The figure on the cover with wings, etc., is intended, saith the artist, to portray the Genius of Literature. But how any man in his senses could set forth such a fat, comfortable looking fellow as the *vera effigies* of what is hungriest, leanest, empty-pursiest, and without-a-centiest on earth I am at a loss to say." This was two months before the New



Year's reckoning when he wrote that he thought he might safely calculate on earning four hundred dollars by his pen the coming twelve month, which would be enough to support him.

Before that year ended, Lowell issued the prospectus of a magazine of his own. As the editors, Lowell and Robert Carter, were the proprietors as well, they scorned the succour of the Fashion Plates and Fashion articles which had so chafed the literary editor of the *Miscellany*, and which had after all proved unable to keep the periodical afloat. Lowell's poor health compelled him slightly to anticipate the destined failure of his magazine in a short time. It numbered among its literary supporters, Hawthorne, Parsons, Dwight, Poe; but its financial supporters were not forthcoming. Poe in New York praised the magazine highly, as he usually did any magazine when it was printing him; and it highly deserved his praise, as most of the magazines did not. The *Pioneer* chose its name because it intended to push farther into an undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller had yet returned — to seek to create and embody a national literature by awakening a national consciousness. "When I was beginning life," wrote Lowell many years later, "we had no national unity, and the only kind of unity we had was in New England but it was a provincial kind." In the five years he had been writing, he had found an audience in the magazines of Philadelphia and New York, and thus he had a wider field of vision than most dyed-in-the-wool Bostonians. Yet he had more of the Boston scorn than should have been possessed by a young man who had seen in three cities that compromise was the only law of life in the magazine world. "The contents of each number will be entirely Original and will consist of articles chiefly from American authors of the highest reputation. Its object is to furnish the intelligent and reflecting portion of the Reading Public with a rational substitute for the enormous quantity of thrice diluted trash in the shape of namby-

pamby love tales and sketches which is monthly poured out to them by many of our popular magazines,— and to offer instead thereof, a healthy and manly Periodical Literature whose perusal will not necessarily involve a loss of time and a deterioration of every moral and intellectual faculty.”

On the starvation of the *Pioneer* three months later, the field was again left open to what Lowell called the trashy monthlies and the weeklies; and it was again demonstrated in Boston that the reflecting part of the Reading Public would not buy lighter literature. They found all the room for reflection they cared for in the pages of the *North American*, which disdained lightness, and in the religious periodicals, which not only did not disdain it but admitted as good quality of it as was published in most magazines especially devoted to it. Moreover, there were weeklies and news-sheets constantly appearing which did the same thing. All of these re-printed as they pleased, with or without acknowledgment, any tid-bit they had discovered in the magazines. Their literary page was scissored impartially from all exchanges, and chestnuts were plucked systematically from the fire that the magazines had taken so much trouble and risk to build and keep going. There was small incentive for any household to take in a periodical devoted to light literature when it could get gratis with its news and its politics as much of the best light literature as it could digest. For new literary material, the papers paid as a rule nothing whatever; and most of our writers began to publish in that way. Lucy Larcom asked five dollars from *Sartain's Magazine*, but she was sending poems to the *National Era* at the same time without asking or expecting remuneration. A few years later, the weeklies were quite generally paying popular writers by the column for their work, and in another generation they and the newspapers sometimes featured literary leads at fabulous prices. In 1868, Mrs. Stowe wrote Mrs. Fields about *Old Town Folks* (the copy for which Fields had been vainly endeavouring

to extract for her, although she had been paid in advance so that she might concentrate all her efforts upon it): "It would be greatly for my pecuniary interest to get it done before the first of September, because I have an offer of eight thousand dollars for the newspaper use of the story I am planning to write afterward." But this glad day was not yet.

With competition, then, from news and political and religious papers plentifully besprinkled with literature, monthly periodicals devoted to the latter could not long exist. As true in 1845 as in 1835 were the words of the *Boston Pearl*. "We beg to say that in our humble opinion no monthly magazine exists in this land which can be said to be exceedingly creditable to the country." It might have made an exception of the *New England*, but for some reason, probably personal, it had little liking for that meritorious magazine and lost few chances of saying so. "We are told that puffing is the order of the day," it said editorially, "and that the *New England* eschews such a course. But the non-puffing character of the *New England* is not quite attained yet — for we pronounce it the most notorious reservoir of puffs in the country." The *Pearl* published a weekly review of the theatre and a musical department which also furnished original compositions. But in spite of numbering Whittier, John Neal, Tuckerman, Pike, Longfellow, Mrs. Stephens, and Mrs. Sigourney among its contributors, and in spite of publishing poems of sometimes very considerable length (one of fifty Childe Harold stanzas, for instance) it did not aspire to nor was it accorded the dignity of letters to which any monthly periodical might lay claim by the sole title of its less frequent appearance. The *North American*, which wore the highest crown of all, was still a quarterly. The pert stand of the *Pearl* in the matter of subscriptions would alone show how remote it was from the loftiness of the true literary spirit. It, at times, published a list of delinquents and threatened to stereotype the persistent offenders!

When the *Dial* ran down in 1844 because its ardent supporters practised not wisely but too well the plain living they preached, and borrowed rather than bought, the *Harbinger* of Brook Farm became its successor in 1845. The same spirit informed it and the same people wrote for it. Its editors were Ripley, Dana, and Dwight; and among the contributors were Clarke, Curtis, Channing, and Cranch. Edited in a less temperamental manner and managed with better business skill, it outlived the social experiment of which it was the organ; and when Brook Farm was abandoned, it was still strong enough to scabble two years for its living in the streets of New York. The *Harbinger* was almost as endeared to its readers as the *Dial* had been. The great civilising work of Clarke in the West was equalled in a more specialised way by that of Dwight in Boston. There he issued in 1852 the first number of *Dwight's Journal of Music*, destined to perform a great cultural mission. It was to give an honest report, week by week, "of what we hear and feel and in our poor way understand of the great world of music. Music has made rapid progress within the last fifteen and even the last ten years. It requires a regular bulletin. Very confused, crude, heterogeneous is this sudden musical activity in a young utilitarian people. It needs a faithful, severe, friendly voice to point out steadfastly the models of the true, the ever beautiful, the divine." The periodical continued in various sizes for over thirty years, and its farewell was attended by a tribute greater than any other American periodical had ever received. In 1880, the year before it closed its long and honourable career during which its editor had consistently refused to allow it to be published in the interests of any music house (a unique record), it was tendered a testimonial concert by the musicians of its native city which it had done so much to make the foremost musical centre of America. But the six thousand dollars they raised were insufficient to keep it going in the face of competition from musical

journals whose fortunes were watched over by interested firms.

It is rather ironic to find that after all of Boston's attempts in the first half of the century to sustain a miscellany which should equal in stability the *North American Review* and secure, as it had secured, some favourable European mention, destiny had reserved the latter boon, though not the former, to the *Lowell Offering*. What had been denied to Dennie, to Tudor, to Buckingham, to Emerson, to Lowell as editors, was bestowed, and in the most public and flattering manner, upon the mill-girls of Lowell! Also, its circulation, though limited, was probably wider than any of the Boston magazines of the half-century period. Aside from the unique and moving nature of its appeal, there is something particularly engaging about this candid human document. Never before had a periodical written as its valedictory, "It has supported itself and has supported us, and very likely better than we should have supported ourselves in any other way." It was a magazine of thirty one-column pages, price six and a half cents. On the first copy was the announcement "*This number wholly written by Females employed in the Mills.*" In order to combat the prejudice against female editors and publishers, it was thought best that the enterprise be endorsed by some of the leading men of the city. There are no longer any Females; and one supposes the anti-suffragists might counter gloomily "And no mill girls who can publish a magazine either!" Yet on second thoughts, even an anti-suffragist could hardly take a periodical composed and printed by even pre-historic mill-girls as an argument that woman's place is the home. Flushed with its success, the magazine adorned its plain cover with a vignette, and explained it thus: "To represent the New England school-girl, of which the factories are made up, standing near a beehive, emblem of industry and intelligence, and in the background the Yankee school-house, church, and factory."

The motto was *The Worm on Earth May Look up to the Star*. "But this rather abject sentiment," writes Harriet Robinson, "was changed finally to *Is Saul among the Prophets?*" It may be said that at one time its fame caused the mill-girls to be considered very desirable for wives. In answer to many doubting Thomases the editor said: 'The articles are all written by factory-girls and we do not revise them. We have taken less liberty with them than editors usually take.' " Perhaps it was because of this lack of editorial interference that within the space of three years' time seven books had been published by its contributors. Lucy Larcom wrote for it, and says that on the advice of the editor she summoned up enough courage to demand payment for a poem submitted to a magazine of the outer world. The *North American* in its stately way indorsed the *Lowell Offering* and said that it was probably exciting more attention in England than any other American publication. There, Harriet Martineau had eagerly pounced upon it as propaganda for her revolutionary idea that working hands might have thinking brains which the country would be better for cultivating; Dickens said in his *American Notes* that it would compare advantageously with a great many English annuals. In France, George Sand glowed with this message from the new world that a factory need not stifle mental and emotional energy; and Thiers actually carried it into the Chamber of Deputies as an exhibit of the possibilities of working women under a Republican government.

The *Lowell Offering* was, however, but the daintiest of rapier thrusts in comparison to the bludgeon which was in pickle for the Boston high-brows. The Hub had refused to support a magazine of light literature, and the gods, as if in retribution, were to make her the protesting parent of the popular illustrated weekly in America. Recall, if you will, the shudder of culture at illustrations even of the better sort, and you will see that this was a heavy blow. The cradle of the *North American*, the country's longest lived and most dignified publication, was to be desecrated

by a bouncing and tattooed infant which made not the least pretensions whatever to literature in the Boston sense, and yet sprang almost at once into Boston's most profitable periodical. *Gleason's*, afterwards *Ballou's Pictorial*, fell away just as far as her shameless name betokens from the standard of the Tradition. Its pictures were multitudinous for that day and would be many for ours. They illustrated not only its wildly romantic tales and serials but topics of the day also. *Gleason's* was not even good enough to be embalmed in history, ungenerously derided like the *Ledger* by the prominent writers whom it paid better than any other periodical. The historian cannot discover that it even shocked the sober religious papers by any pyrotechnics, as did the *Ledger* when it captured Beecher, for instance. It was only hopelessly and fatly bourgeois. Nor was its great financial success in its native town the sole thorn it planted in her side. To have given birth to a Pictorial was bad enough for a well-connected matron, but even with this affliction Boston had not sufficiently atoned for her sin of scornful indifference to all but ambrosia. The builder of the Boston tradition became the grandmother of a brood of pictorials, and thus was the means of debauching the taste of all America with pictures. For on *Gleason's* staff was a young Englishman named Carter, who perceived that the old idea of just enough pictures to float the text was a back number, and that one would get more profitable returns if he figured upon just enough text to float the pictures. This young man came to New York, and, changing his name (possibly to bury completely his Boston past), started in 1855 *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*. And upon the money which he harvested during the Civil War, through his field correspondents accompanied by artists, he committed misdemeanour after misdemeanour. He became a "pictorial" factory, and the national influence of his ten illustrated papers and magazines proved really frightful (viewed with the eyes of the Boston Tradition). *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly*

(1876) lived up for almost a quarter of a century to its epithet. And by that time Boston had grown less proud of her attitude, and realised that she was getting a little stiff in the joints.



## CHAPTER IV

### PHILADELPHIA, THE VALLEY OF SELF-SUFFICIENTNESS

"DISSECT ridicule and you will find envy," saith the sage. The pedigree of the stock joke about Philadelphia should comfort that city for adding to the gaiety of comic weeklies and vaudeville monologues. It dates back to the time when she was easily first in the sisterhood of cities. Boston and New York, smarting at her greater culture and social development, took refuge in a contemptuous sniff; and New York sniffed the louder because she had more reason to be jealous.

Yet, of all human mechanisms, that which is known as "saving the face" is most constantly on the job; and the transparent gibe began to have real point as it came of age. For when Philadelphia grew conscious that her supremacy was dwindling, she in her turn sought to support her chagrin by adopting that buttressed complacency for which she is now notorious. At the beginning of the century Neal, in an English magazine, jealously referred to her natives as "mutton-headed Athenians," but he knew in his soul that Philadelphia had the right to call herself the Athens of America. Later, Irving said the Philadelphians did nothing but pun, and a little later still, Longfellow said they did nothing but dance. Toward the end of the fifty-year period which this chapter covers, Lowell, with no jealousy whatever (although he had come to Philadelphia because Boston couldn't support him), termed the city a provincial valley of self-sufficientness and contentment. Leland, returning from Europe in 1842 to his birthplace, said there was no city in the world of which so little evil could be said and so much good, yet of which so few ever spoke with enthusiasm.

Its inhabitants were all well bathed, well clad, well behaved, all with exactly the same ideas and the same ideals. A degree of refinement was everywhere perceptible, and they were so fond of flowers that I once ascertained by careful enquiry that in most respectable families there was annually much more money expended for bouquets than for books. When a Philadelphian gave a dinner or supper his great care was to see that everything *on* the table was as good or perfect as possible. I had been accustomed to first considering what should be placed *around* it on chairs as the main item.

Nevertheless, in spite of them all and in spite of the undeniable smugness which Philadelphia had now achieved, she published and read more books than either of her sisters. During the first half of the century there were at least one hundred and sixteen Philadelphia magazines. Of these in general, only two items can here be noted. As early as 1805 she had tried to float the first theatrical magazine in America, and within the decade she repeated the attempt five times. In 1824 she kept twelve magazines going at once, three literary, four religious, three medical, and two political. And though Boston had snatched the fillet from her brow, and only within her household was heard any longer the boast that she was the American Athens, she was still centre of culture enough to inaugurate and centre of practicality enough to maintain the three most successful magazines — artistically or financially or both — of the entire period. Thus if she had become the Tomlinson of cities, it was to some purpose. In them she did more to encourage "light literature" in America than Boston, who had seized the sceptre in 1815, or New York, who soon began to clamour for it.

From up Boston way, in 1789, the American Addison came to the American Athens; and with his coming Philadelphia knew her treble supremacy complete. The seat of government, of society, and of the arts (or, as the original Friends might have put it, the world and the flesh and the Devil), she had in all respects her heart's desire. And Joseph Dennie, who was Secretary to the

Department of State, the brilliant centre of her coterie of fashion, and as Oliver Oldschool the founder of her *Port Folio*, summed up in his one person all three. Here is a picture of the famous man, as Buckingham saw him when a printer's devil in his northern editorial sanctum: "A pea-green coat, white vest, nankin small-clothes, white silk stockings, pumps with silver buckles, which covered at least half his foot. His small-clothes were tied at the knees with ribbon of the same colour in double bows, the end reaching down to the ankles. His hair in front was well loaded with pomatum, craped and powdered; the ear-locks had undergone the same process; behind, his natural hair was augmented by a large queue, which, enrolled in some yards of black ribbon, reached half way down his back." This was, if you please, his simple working costume and in provincial New England. Fancy how his brave vibration glittered free when he really spread himself among his peers in Philadelphia, home of wealth and fashion and courtly refuge of many titled foreign exiles! But well for him that the table-loving metropolis was hospitable, and thus he could economise in other ways, for as secretary his salary of one thousand dollars only just equalled his earnings in Walpole, New Hampshire.

"He contributed to chasten the morals and to refine the taste of the nation," inscribed J. Q. Adams upon his tombstone. An Addisonian in life, you see, in death they were not divided. Where is it fled, that stately and heavy Addisonian ideal? Can one imagine the familiar epitaph ever being chiselled again? Refine the taste of the comparatively refined, the *Port Folio* certainly did — Josiah Quincy said it was far and away the best American periodical and quite as good as any English one — but the unrefined saw very little of it. Established in 1801, on its fourth birthday it had raised its price to six dollars — a strapping sum for the Philadelphia yeoman. But, a thoroughly high-class magazine, it would have been caviare to the general. The middle class, when it came

their way, foamed at its lack of patriotism. It unsparingly condemned what in America was bad and bump-tious; it did not feel that America had created all at once an entirely new set of values; it admitted Thomas Moore and Alexander Wilson (visitors in Philadelphia) direct to its columns, instead of stealing them by reprint, as any patriotic American magazine should have done. Seeing these several treacheries, what self-respecting American would have cared how much it had extolled the art of Benjamin West and sought a market for him; or that it praised ardently the native products it could praise; or that it attacked the reviewers and magazine-makers of Great Britain (even when their cadences were most Addisonian!) for "the fastidious arrogance with which they treat the genius and intellect of this country," and said it was only equalled by their profound ignorance of the situation; or that it attacked American critics for "entering into a conspiracy to exterminate American poetry"? In short, refusing to praise Americans because they were Americans and blame Britons because they were Britons, it ran counter to native prejudice, as other unpatriotic Americans have done since; and if it leaned too much to the English side, one must not forget the Addisonian pull and the fact that to many an old-school gentleman like Dennie, Noah Webster's proposition of a *Columbian Dictionary* seemed impious. "Let it be called Noah's Ark," he stormed, "full of its foul and unclean things!"

When the old gentleman — our second professional man of letters — departed the Philadelphia coterie he had so handsomely graced and the heady new world he had so stubbornly striven to hold to Addisonian ideals, the momentum he had given his elegant magazine lasted for some years. In fact, even after it had begun to take in sail it was an unconscionable while a-dying. No sooner had it climbed to what Dennie would have thought the high top-gallant of his joy — being extensively copied by the London *Monthly* — than it was ready to decline. In 1820 it was attempting in vain to arouse the sleep-

ing citizens with a Cassandra call that New York and Boston were threatening their supremacy. Up to that time her contributors had numbered every person of literary consequence within her border; now the traitors and ingrates were sending their wares to New York! As for that upstart city, one of its urchins, *Salmagundi*, had even dared to sit and grin in public at the three-cornered hat and the breeches of the Last Leaf. "One of the editors of the *Port Folio*," snickered the saucebox, "has been discharged for writing common sense." In 1823 the magazine was feeling bitterly its fluttering pulse. "The last volume contains very few communications from any friend to us and to our cause. In the days of our first predecessors such was the number and zeal of contributors that the editor was obliged to exchange the labour of composition for that of selection." Indeed, that year had seen little but European reprints — neither its courage nor its choice, but its necessity in being old. Until 1827 it paced its banquet-hall deserted; then, with the queue of its courtly founder, it went to a postponed but dignified interment.

It was in 1838 that Poe moved to Philadelphia and arranged to write for the *Gentlemen's Magazine*. This had been founded the preceding year by William E. Burton, the actor, who seems to have mounted his hobby-horse gaily and with no more serious purpose than taking a fling with his literary tastes and his own pleasant but occasional pen. Poe became at once his chief contributor, and before the second year was up his editor. The financial arrangement seems to have been more or less of Poe's own making; and when he afterward complained of it he not only forgot this fact, but the important additional one that his fixed salary of ten dollars a week demanded but two hours work a day, and the arrangement especially contemplated giving him ample leisure to write at his regular rates for the magazine and for other periodicals also. When Poe had first applied to him, Burton wrote:

The expenses of this magazine are already wofully heavy; more so than my circulation warrants. I am certain that my expenditure exceeds that of any publication now extant, including the monthlies which are double in price. Competition is high — new claimants are daily arising. I am, therefore, compelled to give expensive plates, thicker paper and better printing than my antagonists, or allow them to win the goal. My contributors cost me something handsome, and the losses upon credit, exchange, etc., are becoming frequent and serious. I mention this list of difficulties as some slight reason why I do not close with your offer, which is indubitably liberal, without delay.

Burton thus looked upon Poe in the light of a luxury which he feared he could not afford, as he himself up to this time had been editor of his own magazine. The new editor at once demonstrated his value, however, and for awhile everything was satisfactory. But at the end of six months his besetting sin got the better of him once more and began to diminish his efficiency. Burton appears to have treated him with the friendliest consideration, although another besetting sin of Poe's was landing the magazine into difficulties. "You must get rid of your avowed ill-feelings toward your brother-authors," wrote Burton. "You see, I speak plainly — indeed, I cannot speak otherwise. Several of my friends, hearing of our connection, have warned me of your uncalled-for severity in criticism." But though Poe somewhat mended his ways in the one respect, he did not in the other. Burton returned to the city one day to find the number still unfinished after the regular date of publication and Poe incapacitated. When the same thing occurred again, Poe was dismissed. Burton resumed the editorial chair. But in this case, as in several others, Poe could look back upon his departure from a magazine as the beginning of a wane in its popularity. Like Mr. By-Ends in *Pilgrim's Progress*, he often had the luck to jump in his conclusions with the times. Not long afterward, Burton asked George Graham to buy his magazine and said he wanted to raise money for his new

theatre. He had run it for four years and was now finding it encroach too much upon his acting. It had just thirty-five hundred subscribers, and he would sell it for that number of dollars. Graham was running a magazine called *The Casket* on fifteen hundred subscribers. He united the two, and the five thousand subscribers found their good-will desired for a new magazine entitled *Graham's*. Fortune smiled upon the union and blessed it with riches and honour, if not with length of days. In a comparatively short time it had reached a circulation of over thirty thousand, an unprecedented popularity; and at the beginning of its second year, in 1842, Greeley printed in the *Tribune* that it was already one of the best magazines of the country and that in refusing its pages to puerile love-stories, maudlin sentiment and stupid verse it had elevated the standard of periodical literature.

Park Benjamin wrote to Graham when he was starting out, "I think I could get Longfellow to write an occasional poem for you at twenty dollars; he asks twenty-five." Graham had immediately set about building up his circulation by publishing the best writers in the country; and though he was not the first editor to pay as much as he could afford, he soon became the first to make a habit of paying well. "I shall be happy to receive stories at twenty-five dollars and poetry at ten dollars per article," he wrote to Frances Osgood as early as 1843. To the principal contributors he was paying as high as twelve dollars a page. Though these prices had been beaten by the New York *Knickerbocker*, the average contributors to that periodical paid dearly for it and the new writers habitually received no money whatever. Peterson told Mrs. Osgood in 1844 that two dollars a page and five dollars a poem were the regular Philadelphia rates for all publishers but Graham. Though Poe was not necessarily sincere in his published criticism of contemporary periodicals in the *New World* in 1843, he told the plain truth when he said: "The

most popular of all the magazines is that published by Mr. Graham, who is a practical business man and a friend to men of talents of every cast. Every article which he prints is liberally paid for, and he has the honour of patronising a larger number of eminent writers in prose and verse than any other publisher in the country." Bryant, in his private correspondence in 1842, several times marvelled at the "vastness" of its circulation. Indeed, the success of the newer style of publications — *Graham's*, *Godey's*, and the *Ladies' Companion* — seemed to him disquieting, in spite of the fact that our best writers were appearing in all three. He may have thought, as did Mrs. Stowe, that poets and essayists should not elbow their way among coloured fashion-plates. Graham appears to have tried for awhile to conduct the editorial and the business departments of his magazine both at once, but the exactions of the latter proved too much for him. "I sometimes wish," he wrote to Mrs. Osgood in 1843, "that I had gone on quietly in my little law office, using my pen modestly as a writer for a few years more, instead of embarking on the stormy sea of publishing heart and — I sometimes fear — soul. I do not fancy I should have made much more, but I fancy I should have had more moments of delight than can be possibly stolen from the bustle of an active and successful business life. Do you know that among my forty thousand readers there are but few, and among several score of agents there are none, who do not think a publisher bound to answer all their impertinence, as well as to furnish them books for their money?" In less than a year Graham decided that he could not serve God and mammon at the same time, and decided to call Poe — who seems to have been recommended to his attention by Burton, in spite of their two mishaps — to the exclusive service of the former.

If one may venture to carry out this somewhat startling figure of speech, it can be added that Poe was no sooner installed than he sought to purge the temple of its money-



changers. Although he showed an excellent head for business, it did not seem to occur to him, any more than to Bryant or Mrs. Stowe, that it may have been the money-changers who so swelled the congregation. He wrote Thomas much later that his reason for resigning from *Graham's* was "disgust with the namby-pamby character of the magazine; I allude to the contemptible pictures, fashion-plates, music and love-tales." The salary, too, did not pay him, he said, for the labour he was forced to bestow. When he was seeking to interest Anthon in his own project of a magazine, he wrote:

In about eighteen months after I became editor of *Graham's* its circulation increased from about five thousand to no less than fifty thousand [which was decidedly stretching it at both ends!] — astonishing as this may appear. It is now two years since I left it, and the number is not more than twenty-five thousand. In three years it will be extinct. The nature of this journal was such that even its fifty thousand subscribers could not make it very profitable. Its price was three dollars, but not only were its expenses immense, owing to the employment of absurd steel plates and other extravagances, which tell not at all, but recourse was had to innumerable agents who received it at a discount of no less than fifty per cent. and whose frequent dishonesty occasioned enormous loss.

Graham testifies that Poe was an admirable editor. Poe's weakness may have been the cause of their separation, but it is more likely to have been the quarrel which Graham avers. At any rate, their relations remained friendly. Graham accepted a story from him in New York, for which Poe asked and was paid fifty-two dollars. As the story was unpublished for a year, the author asked and received permission to submit it for a prize of one hundred dollars offered by the *Dollar Magazine* of Philadelphia. The story was *The Gold Bug*, and it won the competition. In March, 1850, Graham printed an open letter to Willis defending Poe against Griswold's biography. He said: "For more than eighteen months I saw him almost daily, much of the time writing or conversing at the same desk, and he was always punctual

and unwearied in his industry and the soul of honour in all his transactions. This, of course, was in his better days; but even after his habits had changed there was no literary man to whom I would more readily advance money for labour to be done." Not content with this, Graham afterward printed a mordant letter to Griswold himself.

For a short while after Poe's departure the magazine was run by Ann Stephens and Peterson together — or, at least, she allowed her name to be used. This presents an interesting discrimination quite worthy in its subtlety of the most genteel of modern anti-suffragists. Mrs. Stephens had tried her hand at running several magazines and considered it ladylike employment, but an editorial position on a newspaper (even a Sunday supplement) was unsexing. She once wrote to Griswold that she had been made ill by the cruel rumour that she had become editor of the *Sunday News*. It had so wounded her that if she were not compelled to write for her daily bread she would never put pen to paper again. "I feel indignant that any member of the press should believe me capable of accepting a situation proper only for the other sex; and no one knows how keenly I feel anything calculated to represent me as unwomanly." Nevertheless, she did not shrink at driving a very masculine bargain, if Poe's statement in that firebrand article of his on the New York Literati was true. In spite of announcements, he affirmed she had nothing to do with the editing of *Graham's*, of the *Ladies' Companion*, or of *Peterson's*. In the days when the sex was first entering the business field, the incompatibilities of the Old woman and the New engendered in the distracted minds of those ladies who were thus seeking to be twins some charming sophistries.

But — whatever anti-suffragist ladies may persuade themselves — sophistries are not solely feminine. Here is one of the masculine gender. Said the *United States Gazette* in 1845:

We perceive that our neighbours Godey and Graham have both taken out a copyright for their respective magazines. This is rather new, but on looking at the matter carefully we think it is entirely correct. The articles in each cost, we suppose, from three hundred dollars to five hundred dollars. These are frequently taken out bodily, and before the magazines reach half their subscribers their contents have been made familiar to the community through the daily or weekly papers. Not to give offence to anybody, we will state a fact: Graham gave us fifty dollars for a story, and we published the same article almost as soon as it appeared in the magazine. We, of course, asked permission.

The abuse was a very extensive one. "It is no doubt gratifying to a publisher to have liberal extracts made from his work," wrote another conscientious editor, "but credit to the magazines is often omitted by newspapers." Even the chief victims of the practice did not, for a long time, dream of questioning it. Apparently, they thought, despite the inconvenience and loss occasioned by it, the most they had a right to demand was credit for the reprinted article. In one of Godey's numbers is this editorial statement: "Nearly one-half of our book for the ensuing month was copied into one of the weekly papers some ten days before we were ready to publish. We had sent an early copy of our work to our editor, then absent, who placed it in the hands of the *gentleman* publisher to have an article of poetry copied in his paper. He copied nearly one-half of the contents." Perhaps even the *Baltimore Visitor* would have thought this stretching too far the courtesy of the trade, but it would have objected to the subterfuge rather than the thing itself. It expressed its opinion of this new high-handed act of self-protection very tartly: "It pains us to see that Mr. Godey has resorted to the narrowly selfish course of taking out a copyright for his book. He will rue it bitterly. Think of this insulting proposition: 'We have no objection to any paper copying any story from our magazine, *if they will not do it until the succeeding number is published.*' Wonderful liberality, Mr. Godey,

toward that department of the press to which you are more or less indebted for a handsome fortune!"

Poe wrote at the time in his *Broadway Journal*:

It is really difficult to see how any one can, in conscience, object to such a course on the part of Messrs. Godey and Graham. It has long been the custom among newspapers, the weeklies especially, to copy magazine articles in full and circulate them all over the country — sometimes in advance of the magazines themselves. To such an extent had their piracy been carried that many magazine subscribers had ceased to be such, because they could procure all that was valuable from the newspapers very little later, and often at less cost.

It was in November, 1842, that Poe left *Graham's*. The next important occupant of the chair was Rufus Griswold, about whose character and competence existed in that day as in this such vehement difference of opinion. Certainly, many admirable people of his day admired him; and few persons, says Leland, ever possessed more enthusiastic or steadily devoted friends. There were those who maintained, with Greeley, that nobody had ever so drawn to an American magazine all the talent of the country. Irving was the only important man who never wrote for it, and that was apparently because the *Knickerbocker* had arranged for all the work which he was willing to publish in this way. "Our October number is very good," wrote Griswold to Fields, "with Bryant, ✓ Cooper, Longfellow, Hoffman; in November we have ✓ Longfellow, Cooper, Bryant, R. H. Dana, Sr., Tuckerman, Hoffman, Osgood." So many names of the first magnitude constantly shone in *Graham's* that the magazine seems to have been the first to give point to the unending controversy of fame versus merit. This had not arisen in the case of the equally brilliant *Knickerbocker*, for their pages were always open to nice young authors who would write for nothing. Half a dozen years later, when both *Graham's* and the *Knickerbocker* were desperately trying to live up to their past, Kimball in New York wrote to young Leland in Philadelphia:

"Come over to New York. It is better to have the influence with a periodical which gratuitous contributions will bring, rather than the money which you might receive for them." But Leland, who was getting five dollars a page, "when the publishers want me at all," was not at the time willing to write for nothing, unless he did it (as shortly happened) in an editorial capacity. But these days for *Graham's* were yet distant, and in 1843 Hawthorne was writing to Griswold: "I am advised that the publishers of magazines consider it desirable to attach writers exclusively to their own establishments and will pay at a higher rate for such monopoly. If this be the case, I should make no difficulty in forswearing all other periodicals for a specified time — and so much the more readily on account of the safety of your magazine in a financial point of view." But then, as now, the big guns sometimes failed to go off. The magazine had quite a run on Cooper, and published his *Lives of the Naval Commanders* and a serial story. Graham said the eighteen hundred dollars he paid for the latter might as well have been thrown into the sea, for it never brought him a new subscriber. "I am not surprised at what you say concerning *Graham's* and *Godey's*," wrote P. P. Cooke to Griswold in 1847, in answer to a letter the contents of which may be surmised. "Magazine articles derive nine-tenths of their pecuniary value to publishers from the known and famous names attached to them. Longfellow's worst poem, however a chance effort of mine might excel it, would be vastly more valuable to Graham than anything I could send him. Before hearing of the prize-poem method of getting supplies, these were my views on the subject, and I expected very little from the magazines pecuniarily." *Graham's* was not doing so well now; and Greeley — who was trying to find a market for a new writer, Thoreau, for whom Margaret Fuller had asked his interest — found him slow pay, and after waiting a year drew on him for the money. "If you choose to publish this," wrote Greeley in 1846, "and

pay as much as you pay others for right good prose, where you are not buying the name." The price, which both Griswold and Greeley called liberal, was seventy-five dollars — for an essay which formed the leading article for two numbers.

Although Poe said that Griswold left the magazine in disgrace, he continued to act off and on as its assistant editor for years. Graham, evidently feeling with his diminishing revenues that he could no longer afford an editor-in-chief, resumed active charge, assisted by E. P. Whipple to do the editorial reviews. Bayard Taylor and Leland came into the office later. Graham gave it up about 1855, and four years later it sought to revive its existence under the new name of the *American Monthly*. Thus Poe's amiable prophecy of its extinction within three years after he had ceased to guide its fortunes was almost a decade out of the way. On Griswold's death, Leland, who was then editor, printed in the magazine that under his care and direction it first achieved a high literary tone and acquired authority. Nor could Poe have convinced Leland, as he so easily convinced himself, that Griswold's management had anything to do with the decline in its fortunes. That it did steadily decline after Poe's departure is true, although Poe's statement that it at once lost half its subscription list was eminently Poe-like. By the time Leland took it the circulation had become almost nothing, and the new editor succeeded in forcing it up to seventeen thousand. In his autobiography he said:

I filled it recklessly with all or any kind of literary matter as best I could, little or nothing being allowed for contributions. For this I received fifty dollars a month. When I finally left it, the proprietors were eighteen months in arrears and tried to evade payment. Finally they agreed to pay me in monthly instalments, and fulfilled the engagement. While editing it I had one day a space to fill. In a hurry I knocked off "Hans Breitmann's Party." I gave it no thought whatever. Clark republished it soon after in the *Knickerbocker*, saying that it was evidently by me. I wrote in those days a vast number of

such anonymous drolleries, many of them, I dare say, quite as good, in *Graham's Magazine* and the *Weekly Bulletin*, but I took no heed of them. They were probably appropriated in due time by the authors of "Beautiful Snow."

Indeed, Leland seems habitually to have equalled Tudor's feat with the first number of the *North American*; for, besides his literary contributions, the various editorial departments had now so stretched out as to occupy the major portion of the magazine. The Monthly Summary and the Review on Fashions were voluminous; and the Editor's Table was decidedly of the extension variety, leaf after leaf being inserted each month.

Wrote *Graham's* in 1844:

It has become the fashion among a certain set, a very small one, to sneer at the "light" magazines — as if the literature of a young and growing nation must be heavy to be good, or would be popular if it were. The light magazines are but so many wings of a young people panting for a literature of their own. They are training a host of young writers and creating an army of readers, who are urging on a happier day. We do not despair, if we live, of seeing a high-toned magazine with fifty thousand readers, or of publishing it, and without the aid of pictures; but the man who expects it now is a quarter of a century ahead of his time, a fellow with his eyes shut, dreaming of a heaven which he has no ability to assist in creating. We have satisfied ourselves in our attempt to make *Graham's* the best of its class, and the highest even in literary reputation of any American magazine, and shall gradually blend with the lighter character of the work as much of the useful as may be deemed prudent. It is perhaps true that the popular magazines of the day are too much devoted to the merely ornamental; and the department of Our Portrait Gallery, with biographies of our own writers and naval heroes, must be hailed as a relief as well as a good omen. We believe the day is not far distant when the pioneers in the lighter magazine may be able to modify much the character of their magazines. There can be no doubt that as taste improves and extends, the public will be content with one or two exquisite original engravings worth a dozen copies of stale prints. If the elegant original works we have now in hand are properly appreciated, we shall adopt at once the plan of having all our pictures painted expressly for this magazine. In the meanwhile — gentlemen critics —

remember that ours is a magazine of art as well as literature; and that we are furthering the interests of a large number of artists as well as writers, and judge us accordingly.

The policy of gradually diminishing the number of engravings in favour of a few original ones evidently proved a mistake. In 1848 they announced that they would revive the original splendour of the pictorial department, though every attempt would be made to keep it from degenerating into the picture-book for children which the magazines of feeble aims had become. In 1852 occurs this editorial comment:

One of the magazines mentions the astonishing sum of five hundred dollars as designed to be spent upon the illustrations of each number. We have published many a number on which we have expended four times that sum without any parade about it. The printing and paper of one of our steel plates cost over that sum always, to say nothing of the original cost of the engraving, which is from one to two hundred dollars.

In a sketch of George Graham, with his portrait, in July, 1850, Charles J. Peterson said:

He infused a new spirit into magazines. The monthlies had been filled with second-hand British stories or indifferently written original tales; while their poetry, except what was taken from well-known authors, was such "as both gods and men abhor"; the illustrations were few and indifferent. Its freshness, beauty and ability at once placed it before all others in popular favour. Success from the start allowed him to persevere in increasing its literary and pictorial excellence. No sooner were Longfellow, Bryant, Cooper discovered to be permanent contributors than thousands who had heretofore looked with contempt on American monthlies hastened to subscribe. The benefit thus done to popular literature cannot be calculated. It will be long, perhaps, before any one man will have it in his power to do again as much.

In 1844 the magazine was advertising that the best American writers were almost all of them publishing in Graham's exclusively. The next year Lowell wrote to a friend from Philadelphia, where he was living — even if very simply — chiefly on his contributions to the maga-



zine: "Graham has grown fat, an evidence of his success. He lives in one of the finest houses in Arch Street and keeps his own carriage." By the latter part of 1848, however, scarcely one of the well-known names advertised on the title-page as the principal contributors appeared within — although the list still included very respectable names and Poe was contributing monthly "*Marginalia*." George Graham announced during the year that a series of misfortunes had deprived him of any proprietary interest, and that the present publishers had treated him liberally:

From two not very profitable magazines, *Graham's* sprung at once into boundless popularity and circulation. Had I not in an evil hour forgotten my own true interests and devoted that capital and interest to another interest, which should have been exclusively confined to this magazine, I should to-day not be writing this notice. What a daring enterprise in business can do, I have already shown in *Graham's* and the *North American* (a newspaper). And, alas! I have also shown what folly can do, when business is forgotten. But I can yet show the world that he who started life with but eight dollars in his pocket and has run such a career as mine is hard to be put down.

It was announced that year that Bayard Taylor would assist in the editorial department. This youngster had written in 1843 that his highest ambition was to appear in *Graham's*. Now, five years afterward, one of the new owners went over to New York to propose that he manage the magazine. Taylor regarded the opportunity as an exceptionally fine one: "He offers me the situation at a thousand a year, promise of increase in a year or two, and perfect liberty to write for any other periodical. I will have a fine office to myself, and the work will only occupy three to four hours daily. I have consulted with Greeley and Willis, who advise me to go." He was also to write an article a month, receiving extra pay for it. "How shall I leave this mighty city of New York?" he wrote to another friend. "Philadelphia is merely an immense provincial town; *here* is the metropolis of a continent." He need not have worried, however, as the

involved business affairs of the magazine were so arranged in the end that he became editor in name only, and, an absentee, merely contributed a little more frequently. In 1851 Graham regained control of the magazine, and before the end of the year thanked his friends for rallying to him and allowing him to guide his shattered bark into harbour once more. But in spite of assurances of great increases in subscriptions, there were decided evidences of scrimping. (The brisk editorial tone of former days was much reinforced.) About 1852 the department Small Talk became not only prominent by elongation, but by the adoption of a lively button-holing style of casual comment on things in general and the excellence of *Graham's* in particular that seems startlingly modern. Thus ever, in the magazine world, voices heighten as they take their flight!

*Graham's* and *Godey's* are linked forevermore by Hawthorne in the House of Seven Gables. Here he mentions them as if they were the two principal magazines of America. Contemporary estimation linked them also in blame as well as praise. Briggs wrote Lowell that he had always misunderstood Poe, "from thinking him one of the Graham and Godey species." Readers thought of them together, because of their similar run on steel engravings and fashion-plates. And last — but not least — writers bracketted them in red letters as sure and good pay. When Willis was about to start a magazine of his own he wrote:

Adieu to the third sign of the Zodiac! Adieu, O Gemini! Adieu, Godey and Graham! Most liberal of paymasters, most gentle of taskmasters, pashaws of innumerable tales, adieu! Pleasant has been our correspondence! Pleasant the occasional meetings in your city of Phil-gemini, Phil-Graham and Godey. Adieu to our captivity in magazine land. The messenger which you sent us that it was time to write was not more punctual than the golden echo to our compliance. We may look back from the land of promise, as the Israelites hankered after the flesh-pots of Egypt — but we shall return no more! Cling to

our hand at parting, and wish us well on our own-hookivity. We leave you reluctantly.

But, alas! inseparable in life, in deaths they were very much divided. Long, long after *Graham's* had breathed its last did the most successful of Philadelphia magazines continue to boast "the greatest circulation in the world." In the attic of what boy and girl was there not a pile of old *Godey's*? Into what wondering eyes now grown dim with age did not the hydrocephalic and high-lighted heads which spattered its raven-black steel engravings spring, as though they would leap from the page? Who has not shaped his childish dream of high romance out of its wooden-limbed cavaliers and its swan-necked ladies dripping with draperies? Well might Godey, whose voice was hoarse proclaiming his own modesty, style himself a national institution. Begun in 1830, it united in 1837 with the decorous *Ladies' Magazine* of Boston, which had started two years earlier; and the editor of that periodical, Mrs. Sarah Josepha Hale, moved southward with the editorial chair.

She was amply worth the transportation. Continuing for forty years the editor of the literary department, she advocated the higher education of women and other reforms, yet shocked no mater familias by her tactful progressiveness. Writer of plays and cook-books; mother alike of Thanksgiving Day and Mary's Little Lamb; one foot on land as completer of the Bunker Hill monument and one on sea as founder of the Seamen's Aid Society; to one thing was she constant her whole life long — to render the Lady's Book "the guiding star of female education, the beacon-light of refined taste, pure morals, and practical wisdom." Assisted in the beginning by "the good and gifted Mrs. Sigourney," she saw to it that nothing having the slightest appearance of indelicacy was ever admitted to these pages. Every month she contributed a moral sentimental essay on the duties and the privileges of the sex, quite admirable in its *genre* and

for its age — Victorian in its accents, yet progressive and human in its spirit. Her publisher announced that she had shone in every species of writing, and all distinguished by the chastity, morality and sympathy which she had put into them. There never lived a more ideal president of a Mother's Congress. In 1860 Godey announced: "We do not publish a mere story-book. We seek to enlighten and instruct womankind." Mothers take it for their daughters, whose mothers took it for them. It is an heirloom in families. If mere stories are wanting, outraging Munchausen, you must subscribe to some other publication. Those articles of fiction we do publish have all a moral tendency, and won't suit the readers of *The Ensanguined Dagger*, *The Perils of a Housemaid* or *The Benevolent Pirate of the Gulf*."

Moral tendency they had, indeed — according to the Victorian definition. Happiness ever awaited virtue, and though heaviness might endure for a night, joy came with the milkman. Already a changed taste was appearing when, in 1860, Howells wrote of their incredible insipidity. Dear Mrs. Hale, what would she have thought had she lived to see not only taste change, but morality also! Judge of her consternation had the sad fate awaited her which came two decades later to the mother of that sweet child Elsie Dinsmore — who lived to hear her offspring termed an officious brat hurling her golden texts in a very orgy of exhibitionism at every handy passer-by. Blessed are the dead who die in time!

Mrs. Hale took the literary control and managed her editorial department. There were other departments besides — Arm Chair, Literary Notices, Centre-Table Gossip, Health, and Fashions. "How often must we say that Mrs. Hale is not the Fashion Editor," the Arm Chair was frequently scolding. The Fashion Editor took orders for making the hair of loved ones into beautiful bracelets and pins; and she would buy bonnets and mantillas for you, and even hinted at more extensive shopping on certain interesting occasions. As the magazine pub-

lished instructions for drawing, it agreed to furnish for a small consideration the proper pencils. The "sociable air" of *Godey's* was widely commented upon. They printed many flattering letters from correspondents (a quaint custom, which might well be revived!). As early as 1847 there was a series of articles on Model Cottages, with pictures and ground plans (and what Mansard and Swiss horrors they were!). In 1849 they offered a handsome bouquet for the best essay from the pen of some fair correspondent on a subject which had of late been all-absorbing, "What Becomes of the Pins?" The "family air" of *Godey's* might be crystallised by Mrs. Hale's announcement in 1846 of the death of Mr. Godey's mother. "The numerous readers of the *Lady's Book*, who may have regretted its delay for several months past, will now understand the painful nature of those duties which engrossed the proprietor, and their kind hearts will sympathise with the sorrows of an only son." Dear Mrs. Hale! it is difficult to picture her in anything but black silk, with a fall of lace at the sleeves and at the slightly surplined neck — a veritable Lucy J. Hayes in her white sanctum.

But while she was speaking in her soft and edifying accents, *Godey* was sounding the first strident note of modern magazine advertising. There are few contemporary magazines which more insistently proclaim their own perfections. Godey had an impressive way of referring to his magazine as *The Book*. He certainly quoted it to serve his own purpose. He was always predicting that the next number would surpass all records, and admitting the succeeding month that he had guessed right. Perhaps the first American slogan was "What Will Godey Do Next!" It was a chanticleer call, making up in noise and punctuality for what it lacked in variety. Sometimes he juggled the notes a bit. "Why don't our contemporaries originate something? Why always follow in our track?" The charge was always being substantiated by something like this, in 1845: "When we

adopted, some two years since, the wave rule around and through our page, the pages of every magazine in the country were thus altered immediately. Indeed, a magazine in a neighbouring city copied our pages so exact that we would defy any person to tell the difference between the two, excepting in the reading matter. And, lo! the London *World of Fashion* has also appeared in our late dress. Worse than this, a respectable five-dollar magazine (*Godey's* was three dollars, or two for five dollars, or five for ten dollars, or eight for fifteen dollars) copies on its cover the announcement for 1845, only altering the title and price of the work!" Said Godey proudly in 1839:

You will find in no English magazine such a store of entertainment. We were the first to introduce the system of calling forth the slumbering talent of our country by offering an equivalent for the efforts of genius. Our subscription list now doubles the list of any other magazine in America. A few years ago the *Lady's Book* had not an original article in its columns, with but eight steel plates per annum and four plates of fashion on copper; now it is entirely original and includes the first names of the day, and its embellishments surpass any other magazine of double the price. Nor must our readers suppose we have exhausted our stock of contributions from our lady writers. All accounts not settled during the year will be taxed an additional fifty cents at the end of it. If we must wait, we must be paid for it. By Jupiter, this shall not be revoked!

You cannot imagine Mrs. Hale saying "by Jupiter." Nor can you imagine her gentle heart otherwise than grieving over a series of very unladylike critiques by Poe, which must have rejoiced the stomach of Godey. So great was the demand for the first instalment of the *Literati* of New York that they reprinted it in the next number. Poe was at that time running on a shoestring the *Broadway Journal*, and he had many scores to settle. The series involved the *Lady's Book* in some very unladylike proceedings. Dr. Thomas Dunn English resented Poe's attack on him, and retaliated with a statement in the New York *Mirror*. Poe dipped his pen in the prussic

acid which Lowell said often served him for ink and indicted a rejoinder. This even the shrewd and commercial Godey refused to print; and all of Mrs. Hale's laces must have sighed with relief as she sat down at her desk to breathe her monthly message of peace and love.

Mrs. Hale adhered to the time-honoured custom of announcing accepted contributions; and she requested contributors to keep copies, as she could not undertake to send back rejected articles. "If the writers do not find their contributions noticed within three months, they are rejected." At other times would come this significant notice. "We have been looking over our collection of original poetry. Some of these articles have been on hand so long that their authors may have forgotten them or given them to some other publications. We hope the latter." Therefore, the following announcement may not come as a surprise: "We want it distinctly understood that, unless by previous understanding to that effect, no articles published in this magazine will be paid for. Young writers and those who have not acquired a literary reputation must remember that the mere insertion of their articles in the *Lady's Book* is quite a compensation in itself. It is useless for them to ask what price we pay; it would be better to ask if we will insert their productions." Yet the funeral-baked meats of these youthful rejected writers were sliced up at will to furnish forth the Editor's Table. Mrs. Hale, like most editors of the time, coolly carved out the good morsels to garnish her own feast. In fact, the Table seems to have been devised in the beginning for this thrifty hash of viands, which, like the egg of the meek curate, were "excellent in spots." It must have given the verdant authors a peculiar mixture of exasperation and solace to behold themselves thus willy-nilly minced up into a salad. The extensive practice affords an excellent illustration of the papal editorial attitude of the early days — an attitude not entirely without its influence over our own. After all, these times were not so long ago; and United States congressmen

and publishers were not the only ones who had confused notions of literary property. Authors themselves seemed to be genuinely surprised when an editor — as a New York paper said pointedly of one who had gone into bankruptcy through his “generosity” — paid for something he could get for nothing. It is amusing to see magazines which confessedly remunerated only their prominent contributors constantly trumpeting their open-handedness. And when, as with the *Lady's Book*, they found it profitable to exploit women's work, their blasts might have aroused sleeping chivalry itself, secure within its Dark Tower.

“I sometimes think,” said the Editor's Table in 1842, “that the *Lady's Book* owes much of its unparalleled success to the blessings which the poor of our sex who are benefited by its publication are constantly calling down upon it. Not to reckon the host of female writers, who are promptly *paid*, there are, besides, more than one hundred females who depend for their daily bread on the money they receive from colouring the plates of fashions, stitching, doing up the work, and so on.” And again: “We were the first to bring the happiest productions of the female mind home to the myriad of firesides. This January number is entirely the production of lady writers, and with the exception of the poem of the celebrated Miss Joanna Baillie, from the pens of American ladies.” They got out a number of this sort frequently. The signed contributors were of that forgotten galaxy of ladies — Mrs. Embury, Mrs. Seba Smith, Mrs. Ellet, Mrs. Osgood — whose sentimental voices were sometimes raised shrilly at each other, and whose little hands occasionally sought to tear out each other's eyes. The literary harem was maintained on very limited rations; and think of all the apprentice female pens rhyming and essaying for nothing, awaiting their chance to squeeze in and demand their share of the crumbs that fell from the master's table. It behooved the fortunate inmates to watch each other narrowly for indications of waning charms.



## CHAPTER V

### NEW YORK AND THE MAKING OF A METROPOLIS

"I AM satisfied," wrote Benjamin Rush in 1799, "the ratio of intellect is as twenty to one and of knowledge one hundred to one, in these States compared with what they were before the American Revolution." This was the year that Charles Brockden Brown thought both were ripe enough to create in New York City a demand for a purely literary journal. The *Monthly Magazine and American Review* had been a long-cherished plan. It languished and dwindled until in 1801 it was rebaptised into a momentary resuscitation, the *American Review and Literary Journal*.

Juliet might persuade herself there was nothing in a name, but the proprietors of American magazines — like the proprietors of American theatres — seem always to have reasoned differently. Since the beginning they have sought to hoodwink their hoodo, in the manner of the landlord who hoped to lay his unprofitable ghost by putting up another sign on his inn. In Brown's case, as in all similar shifts in the magazine world, the expedient proved unsuccessful. A magazine that changes its name in hopes of bettering its condition should remember the old counsel to brides, and change the letter also. As long as this remained the same, there was no sufficient public for Brown's magazine. At the century's very beginning, and in New York City, neither intellect nor knowledge was present in sufficient quantity to support a periodical consisting entirely of reviews, reports of foreign works, and a literary journal. It was just another one of those magnificent and foolish undertakings of which we have seen so many; "yet by the bones about the wayside we have come into our own."

The "vision" of the pioneer, Brown shared with the rest; and he stated it in a dignified announcement free from verbiage and the already stereotyped diplomacies of the trade:

The American people are perhaps more distinguished than those of Europe by an universal attention to the active and lucrative pursuits of life. This habit has grown out of the necessities of their situation. Some European critics hold our pretensions in contempt, and many among ourselves seem inclined to degrade our countrymen below the common level. It is only the gradual influence of time that will generate and continue a race of artists and authors purely indigenous and who may vie with those of Europe. This period is, probably, at no great distance; and no means seem better calculated to hasten so desirable an event than those of literary repositories. It is from the want of a clear and comprehensive survey of our literary products that we are in a great measure to ascribe the censures of foreign cities. The plan of a Review, so new in America, has had many prejudices and obstacles to surmount. It was thought that young American writers would not bear criticism and must be treated with peculiar indulgence. Experience has proved this objection to be without foundation. How far those who have executed the department of criticism are qualified for the undertaking, the public have it in their power to decide. Their purpose has been not so much to exhibit their own opinions as the spirit and the manner of the author. It is not probable that any individual can be found who with the requisite ability and inclination has leisure and perseverance enough, successfully to conduct a work of this kind. Depending then as it must do on persons of various pursuits and different political sentiments, it is not surprising that occasional difference of opinion should appear. Original essays we confidently hope for, but no promises are given.

In the last-mentioned hope, as in all the others, he was destined to disappointment. He had been obliged to furnish almost the entire contents of the earlier magazine; it was the same with this and with its successor, the *Literary Magazine and American Register*, established in Philadelphia in 1803. This third of his gallant, premature endeavours struck, in the more intellectual soil of the latter city, roots hardly sufficient to suck up a five years' subsistence. But even there he ran his engine at

one-man power. In 1804 he wrote to his brother: "You will find but a single communication in this number — all the rest of the original prose I have been obliged to supply myself, for which I am sorry, for the sake of the credit of the work as well as of my own ease. The whole original department of July I have been obliged to spin out of my own brain. You will probably find it, of consequence, very dull."

A letter he had written his brother from New York in 1800 mentions other difficulties. "Yesterday the due number of copies of number three of the magazine was put on board the stage for your city, where I hope they have seasonably arrived. This once the printers have been tolerably punctual and hereafter I have reason to think they will be regular. Book-making, as you observe, is the dullest of trades, and the utmost that any American can look for in his native country is to be reimbursed for his unavoidable expenses. The salability of my works will much depend upon their popularity in England." Perhaps he would have lost faith in his vision if he could have foreseen that a half century later his chief successor in New York would still be fighting desperately — to fall at last — the same foe, if under a new face. Said the *Knickerbocker* in an article on Leland in 1856: "Apart from the editors of newspapers, where shall we find a body of men, however innumerable, who can earn their daily bread by their pen alone? We are filled with shame and indignation at the legislative stupidity which offers a few miserable types of American professional litterateur as victims to the niggardly reprinting of a rival literature." The main situation had not altered much, even if a book could count upon wider distribution than in the eleven cities where Brown had agents. "As collection of small sums is difficult and expensive, those who reside at a distance from Boston, Hartford, New Haven, Albany, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Richmond, Alexandria, Norfolk, Charleston, and Savannah, where numbers are sold, will kindly designate some person in

their town as agent to receive and pay for their copies." This difficulty and others caused Brown to turn his magazine into a quarterly at fifty cents a number. "The thin population of the United States renders it impossible to procure sufficient support from any one city, and the dispersed situation of readers, the embarrassments attending the diffusion of copies over a wide extent of country, and the obstacles to a prompt collection of the small sums which so cheap a publication demanded, are, it is presumed, satisfactory reasons for altering the publication so as to diminish these inconveniences."

In spite of all shifts, however, his thoroughly creditable and well-arranged review went down. There was not enough public for its purely intellectual appeal. All European travellers of the period agreed that Americans were inordinately devoted to making money, and the Scotch Mackenzie said that the descendants of the Dutch particularly were avaricious. Those people in New York, too, that might have had leisure and inclination to improve their minds, spent all their time out of the counting-house in social pleasures. The little Dutch town, said Felix de Beaujour, was the only one in America which had a really continental quality—the others were English or West Indian. Close-fisted these Dutchmen might be, but they were very fond of gaieties; and very hospitable in entertainment at their own homes. A resident of Philadelphia remarked in 1806 that there were fewer taverns frequented by the genteel than in his own city, and strangers received far more attention. Most of the energy which cultivated New Yorkers could spare from business went out in maintaining a round of social pleasures, strictly after business hours. The only people who cared about reading, they naturally seized eagerly upon a kind which, so far from taking time from their social pursuits, added a zest to them. Rarely has a more delightful morning dawned in a gay, gossipy little world than January 24, 1807, when the first number of *Salmagundi* appeared.

"It's object," wrote Paulding, "was to ridicule the

follies and foibles of the fashionable world. Though we had not anticipated anything beyond a local circulation, the work extended throughout the United States and acquired great popularity. It was, I believe, the first of its kind in the country; produced numerous smaller publications, none of which, however, extended beyond a few numbers; and formed somewhat of an era in our literature. It reached two volumes, and we could have continued it indefinitely; but the publisher, with that liberality so characteristic of these modern Mæcenases, declined to concede to us a share of the profits, which had become considerable." Yet it seems to have been distinctly understood in the beginning that Longworth, the publisher, in assuming all the risks, would assume the profits also. "We have nothing to do with the pecuniary concerns of this paper," ran the editorial announcement in the first number; "its success will yield us neither pride nor profit, nor will its failure occasion to us either loss or mortification." The authors, indeed, could not have calculated on the paper's doing more than pay expenses — well-nigh universal experience would have taught them to expect even less. When Longworth suggested, fairly enough, that they take out a copyright, they had answered that it was not worth while. Consequently Longworth was quite within his rights when, having taken it out himself in addition to the initial risk, he refused to share his profits with them. But he seems at least to have begun to do so, for the three authors received from him one hundred dollars apiece. It may well be that as they saw the profits unexpectedly mounting up, they took an attitude which the publisher felt some justification in resenting. The immediate cause of their abrupt retirement on the twentieth number was his advancing the price to one shilling. Paulding calculated that he and Irving had enriched their publisher by ten thousand dollars when the copyright expired in 1822.

The success of *Salmagundi* at the time was quite enough to turn the head of any publisher who had in the teeth of

experience handsomely undertaken to assume all risks, and of authors who flew afterward on fire to hear such rich reprisals were so nigh and yet not theirs. Eight hundred copies of the fourth issue sold on the day of publication in a town of eighty thousand inhabitants was electrifying. At first it was to have been published — like the *Philistine* almost a century later — “every once in a while,” but in the first flush of triumph it became a weekly. Though it moderated its pace later, it continued to show all competitors Atalanta’s heels — especially its “next-door neighbour, *Town*,” which soon dropped out of the running. The waggish impertinence, buoyant and bland, of the mysterious trio, Launcelot Langstaff, Anthony Evergreen, and William Wizard, decidedly caught on. It was a new thing for authors to take themselves so lightly (their levity possibly being occasioned by the comforting knowledge that Longworth was footing the bills). “The paper on which this work will be printed is that held in highest estimation by young ladies for buckling up their hair,” read the announcement.

Imitations, as Paulding said, shot up everywhere. Though most of them withered overnight, the neat drolleries of the original remained for a long while the aspiration of every young writer. Why not, indeed, since Irving was the only American who had as yet captured the coveted London approbation? “We had a Dennie,” said the Philadelphia *Critic* censoriously in 1820, “yet his classical elegance has not availed to preserve his countrymen from being intoxicated by the quaintness and affectation of the *Salmagundi* school.” But Beatrice Ironside, the sprightly editress of the Baltimore *Observer*, snapped her fingers at the earlier Addisonian tradition of Dennie with as much delight as the rest of her countrymen. The modified type was more suitable to the century. “Although our city readers have most probably generally seen *Salmagundi*,” she wrote, “yet we cannot forbear extracting the following ludicrous and admirable description. We were almost apprehensive that the wit

which sparkled with such continual brilliancy in the first numbers would have too soon wasted fire, but we are delighted to find the fifth number even perhaps surpasses those which preceded it, and that the genius and satirical talents of the facetious editors appear to be as inexhaustible as the subjects which call them forth."

In 1819 Paulding made an attempt to resuscitate *Salmagundi* while Irving was in Europe. A letter to him in 1820 tells the story.

Hearing last winter that you had finally declined coming home and finding my leisure time a little heavy, I set to work and prepared several numbers of a continuation of our old joint production. At that time and subsequently, I was entirely ignorant that you contemplated anything of the kind [in the Sketch Book]. But for an accidental delay, my first number would have got the start of yours. As it happened, however, it has the appearance of taking the field against you, which neither my head nor my heart will sanction. I believe my work has not done you any harm in the way of rivalry, for it has been soundly abused by many persons and compared with the first part with many degrading expressions. It has sold tolerably, but I shall discontinue it shortly.

Paulding was always disposed to rate their youthful venture much higher than did Irving. "I know you consider old Sal as a sort of saucy flippant trollope not worth fathering," he wrote. Saucy she might well be — the only American magazine who retired with flags flying in the very midst of her triumphs. Had Father *Knickerbocker*, who came along twenty-five years later, taken her breezy tip, his voyage would have been more graceful.

"The dapper little town of the Dutch days," said the *Knickerbocker* making its opening speech, "has bloated into the big metropolis. [The object of our magazine is to represent life and letters as existing here, not to assume their regulation.] In literature, young, fresh, and unhackneyed as Americans are, we are already, by some strange fatuity, grievously given to twaddle." About ten years before Bryant had written the same thing to Dana concerning his magazine, the *Review and Athe-*

*næum*. "It is true, as you say, that there is a want of *literary entertainment* in our journal. But as to the multitude of clever men here who might furnish it, let me say that we have some clever men here, to be sure, but they are naughtily given to instructing the world, to elucidating political economy and jurisprudence, etc. They seem to think it a sort of disgrace to be entertaining. Since the time of *Salmagundi* the city has grown exceedingly grave and addicted to solid speculations. Paulding sometimes writes for our magazine, and we pick up the rest of it as well as we can." [This, then, was the ideal of the *Knickerbocker* — to avoid heavy twaddle and to seek to entertain, as would a courtly gentleman at his own table.] When in 1862 it had escaped for the moment the many calamities that threatened bankruptcy, it permitted itself in thanking its new friends a little retrospect of its honourable history. "People were 'a little aristocratic' then — it was the tone. Knick held up its head with the best of them; the old gentleman always kept good company and scorned the canaille. Well, he found friends in those later darkened days. It is not always enough to get your money's worth in mere paper and names. Pray remember that every magazine has its peculiar subtle influence. He who reads Knick breathes the American tone for thirty years, and renders himself liable of being suspected to be a gentleman through long habit and association." And years after it had descended into rest, Leland wrote endearingly in a similar strain, from the midst of more successful magazines of a later day, "There was never anything quite like the *Knickerbocker* and there never will be again. It required a sunny, genial, social atmosphere, such as we had before the war and never after; an easy writing of gay and cultivated men for one another, and not painfully elaborating jocosities as in ———. But never mind. It sparkled through its summer time, and oh, how its readers loved it! I sometimes think that I would like to hunt up the old title-plate with Diedrich Knickerbocker and his pipe,



and issue it again every month to a few dozen subscribers who loved quaint odds and ends, till I too should pass away."

Everything was done, from the beginning, to increase this atmosphere. An early number regretted that the important ground once occupied by the London *Gentleman's* when it made itself the medium through which gentlemen of taste or science communicated with each other, had been abandoned by modern periodicals. It would always be happy to have its readers exchange views with each other. The Editor's Table, where it chatted at ease over everything in particular and nothing in general, was its glory. Besides this, the editor had gossip with readers and correspondents and remarked upon the various contributions. The last-named practice had been slowly making its way, and it won a permanent if equivocal place in the editorial heart. Probably no modern editor would care to examine the logic of it. Bryant had written to Dana in accepting a contribution for the *Review and Athenæum*, "You will appear in company with Mr. Halleck. The poem entitled Marco Bozzaris is a very beautiful thing. Anderson was so delighted with it that he could not forbear adding the expression of his admiration at the end of the poem. I have my doubts whether it is not better to let the poetry of magazines commend itself to the reader by its own excellence." The *Knickerbocker*, though subscribers were always praising its Table as the chief and peculiar attraction, seemed never to have thought of departing from the fine print in which it had been the modest fashion to clothe editorial utterance. Possibly it typified the still small voice of the sleepless monitor. "So interesting a part of your magazine ought not to appear in such diminutive type," protested one diplomatic correspondent. Following the fashion, too, the type always grew smaller as the Table lengthened from month to month. Even the most voracious guest must have found twenty-six pages of well-nigh invisible print trying. But

minute as it was, the very vanishing point was achieved in the monthly extracts from rejected articles. Perhaps this was also a symbol. Such type nowadays has taken its last stand, for the ordinary God-fearing citizen, in the franker torture-chamber of oculists. In 1860 Editor's Table began to publish a retrospect of their contributors. It was a war measure and the magazine was being starved out, but the history was one which justified self-satisfaction. The extracts from their editorial correspondence, too, included all of America's well-known names and many English ones. Their Ollapodiana, they said, had proved the most popular series of papers they had ever published.

These were written by Willis Clark, brother of the editor, upon whose death, in 1841, the Table had a four-page article. The announcement of his connection with the magazine in 1834 is an interesting item. "The editor's labours will be shared with his brother, whose residence in Philadelphia will oppose no obstacle to a regular division and execution of the duties pertaining to the work, the mail being so prompt as to render the connection entirely practicable. Philadelphia correspondents, or of towns to the south and west of that city, will write to him (post-paid always)." When Poe attacked the *Knickerbocker* in 1843, he said that the only redeeming quality of the editor was that he was the brother of the late Willis Clark. The genial fertile author of Ollapodiana, indeed, exactly realised Bryant's ideal of a magazine man. "I suspect we shall be sorely tried to get matter for the miscellaneous department," he had written Dana in 1826 on launching his magazine. "A talent for such articles is quite rare in this country, and particularly in this city. There are many who can give grave, sensible discussions on subjects of general utility, but few who can write an interesting or diverting article for miscellany." It is amusing to recall that New York once confessed that it had to go to Philadelphia for the light, gay chatter which should keep people awake.

A very brilliant start had the magazine, but its able inaugurator gave up the editorship in less than a year on account of failing health. To him and his successor Poe thus paid his respects in his article, the New York Literati. "Mr. Charles Fenno Hoffman was the original editor of the *Knickerbocker*, and gave it while under his control a tone and character the weight of which may be best estimated by the consideration that the work received an impetus which has enabled it to bear on alive, though tottering, month after month, under Mr. Lewis Gaylord Clark. He subsequently owned and edited the *American Monthly*, one of the best journals we have ever had; and for a year conducted the New York *Mirror*." Nevertheless, in spite of Poe's animosity, Clark conducted the tottering steps of the magazine for twenty years and for about half that time at least gave it a success undreamed of by its earlier editor. "By all means cultivate the *Knickerbocker*," wrote Bridge to Hawthorne, seeking to find an opening. "For one's name to appear there is an introduction." A young writer, however, effected an introduction to the reader far less readily than to the editor. For some time his articles seem to have been modestly signed "By a New Contributor." For the most part, only the better-known names appeared. These immediately gave the magazine prestige. On the financial side, the number of copies had by the middle of the third year grown from five hundred to over four thousand. "With proper encouragement American periodicals will soon surpass those of England," the editor permitted himself to remark in 1837, surveying his increasing success. Several obstacles lay in the way, however. The chief was that old bogey, the unpaid subscription. "Instead of purchasing our magazines as in England," the dying *Port Folio* had said bitterly in 1820, "we subscribe for them." *Knickerbocker* had, in the past two years alone, lost over five thousand dollars. Appealing in 1837 to delinquent subscribers, it begged to point out that maga-

zines, unlike newspapers, had little or no advertising to help defray expenses. One hundred and seven voluntary subscriptions had come in last month, they recorded proudly; but the editor could not have failed to reflect that subscribers often dodged the main issue. Again, the business management of the magazine sometimes did not keep faith. After *Knickerbocker* had begun under the most flattering auspices, the unprincipled management of the original proprietor soon disgusted the public; and the new proprietor had slowly to win back their confidence again. Agents, too, swindled both public and management. As with *Graham's* and *Godey's*, there was the increasing complaint on the part of distant subscribers that their numbers reached them late in the month, and after they had read the best articles in the journals. Early in 1840, they would try the plan of mailing every copy, the most distant first, before the first day of the month, on which day they would promptly serve their city readers. The plan seems to have been unsuccessful in frustrating the newspapers, however, and at the close of 1840 they announced that they would secure for their articles the protection of copyright.

The easy appropriation of their articles by foreign prints was by no means so exasperating. After all, to have become successful enough to be black-mailed has been a fortifying reflection to many a self-made man; and a grievance which can be profitably aired has decidedly good points. It was impressive to be able to complain each month that an article of the month before had been lifted in England, even without acknowledgment or "with numerous mutilations and interpolations suitable to the meridian of London." In 1836 is recorded with a complacent purr that no less than nine distinct articles of theirs, each inserted as original, had appeared in one number of the London *Ladies' Cabinet of Fashion*; in 1840 "Old Knick is growing cosmopolitan—several of our articles have appeared in French and German magazines." The year before there had

been much swagger in their fine scorn of *Bentley's* when it announced that "arrangements had been made for the appearance of the Crayon Papers simultaneously with their appearance in the United States." *Bentley's*, of course, had done nothing of the sort, but what would you? — success had its penalties and poor *Bentley's* its predicaments.

Knickerbocker had been very proud of capturing Irving at last. At the close of its first year, it had regretted that the illustrious editor of Knickerbocker's History had not honoured the magazine, the name of which was the greatest compliment America had ever paid to his genius. It was in March, 1839, that Irving engaged to contribute monthly to its pages, for two thousand dollars a year in stated instalments, "I am tired of writing volumes," he said as he made his bow. "They do not afford exactly the relief I require as I grow old. I have thought therefore of securing to myself a snug corner in some periodical where I might loll at my ease in my elbow chair and chat sociably on any chance subject that might pop into my brain." The task of writing every month proved irksome to him, however, and — says Pierre Irving — the returns were less prompt than he had anticipated. But his good will to the magazine and to Lewis Clark induced him to continue his connection for two years.

In 1843 Poe ran amuck among the magazines in a style which was amazing even for him. He printed in the *New World* of March eleventh an article which *Knickerbocker* announced the following month it had rejected. It seems likely, says Griswold caustically, that he had subsequently somewhat altered his remarks upon that magazine, as he could scarcely have expected them to assert that their own glory had forever departed and that the principal cause of its melancholy decline might be traced to its peculiar and unappreciated editor, Lewis Clark. "The present condition of this periodical is that of a poorly cooked-up concern, a huge, handsome-looking body, but without a soul. The sooner it dies the

better it will be for the proprietors; but if they will secure an able and efficient editor, we doubt not that it might be placed in the noble station it once occupied. Neither do we like the nominal editor of *Graham's Magazine*. A pretty good compiler, he possesses too many of the peculiar characteristics of Mr. Lewis Clark. He is wholly unfit, either by intellect or character, to occupy the editorial chair."

In 1862 the magazine announced that it had passed unto a new proprietor. It confessed to the public that it had many times been in sore straits. "Sooth to say, friends, it would have been little to the credit of America if a periodical which had been made glorious at one time or another by all the great writers of America, and ever maintained a high-toned, refined and moral standard, so that it was emphatically the magazine for a gentleman, should die for want of friends." Later in the same year it asserted that immediately after the change the circulation had nearly trebled, in consequence of the fresh array of talent attracted to it, notwithstanding the severe pressure of the times. Of this change Leland wrote in 1861 in his memoirs: "The old *Knickerbocker* had been for a long time running down to absolutely nothing. Its new purchaser endeavoured to galvanise it into life. Its sober grey-blue cover was changed to orange. Mr. Clark left it to my sorrow; but there was no help for it, for there was not a penny to pay him. [Clark had received a salary and divided the profits as joint-proprietor.] I consented to edit it, for I had an idea. This was to make it promptly a strong Republican monthly, which was utterly opposed to all of Mr. Clark's ideas. The financial depression in the North at this time was terrible. I prophesied editorially a prosperity close at hand such as no one ever dreamed of, and I advocated emancipation of slaves as a *war measure only* and without any regard to philanthropy. As publishing such views in the *Knickerbocker* was like pouring the wildest of new wine into the weakest of old bottles, the proprietor resolved at once to

establish in Boston a political monthly to be called the *Continental*, to be devoted to this view of the situation. It was the only political magazine devoted to the Republican cause published during the war. It was often said that its bold course hastened by several months the emancipation of the slaves by Abraham Lincoln."

"There is always a warmth of feeling awakened when we look upon its neat lilac cover," had said the *United States Gazette* in 1845. One may imagine Knick turning orange for very shame to be thus ungenteelly hustled into the turmoil of the street. The old gentleman leaning upon his stick in the comfortable Dutch chair was fashioned for looking out of the window with the eyes of a contemplative philosopher. To make him an active politician was something like turning Colonel Carter into a ward heeler. "The time is past in this town," had said Philip Hone, another representative of Knickerbocker culture two decades before, "when a gentleman can afford to run for mayor." With Knick, the political career thus thrust upon him in his over-ripe old age, meant his speedy departure from the world. But even in dying he managed a graceful appearance. His name and the familiar vignette remained for some months after 1864 upon the title page of the *American Monthly*, and so he slipped unperceived from a rough world which no longer held to the ancient ideals.

That Poe should have written an article discussing in such a tone the leading magazines of the day; that he should insert therein an attack upon the editor who had just rejected it; that any periodical should have been willing to publish it — each is a glimpse into the editorial urbanities of the time. The press was generally held to be a legitimate vehicle for the venting of personal spite. Another glimpse into the manners and morals of the New York printing world is afforded in Leland's memoirs.

Frank Leslie, who had been with me on *Barnum's*, was now (1860) publishing half a dozen periodicals and newspapers, and offered me a fair price to give him my mornings. There was

much rather shady, shaky Bohemianism about the frequenters of our sanctum. When the war broke out and Frank Leslie found that he no longer required my services, he paid my due, which was far in arrears, in his usual manner—that is, by orders on advertisers for goods which I did not want and for which I was charged double prices. Alexander Cummings had a very ingenious method of “shaving,” when obliged to pay his debts. His friend, Simon Cameron, had a bank—the Middleton—which if not a very wild cat was far from being tame, as its notes were always five or ten per cent. below par, to our loss—for we were always paid in Middleton. I have often known the clerk to take a handful of notes at par and send out to buy Middleton wherewith to pay me. I am sorry to say that such tricks were universal among the very great majority of proprietors with whom I had dealings. To “do” the employés to the utmost was considered a matter of course, especially when the one employed was a “literary fellow” of any kind or an artist. . . . Heaven knows I worked hard enough on *Barnum's Illustrated News*, and, what was a great deal to boast of in those days, never profited one cent beyond free tickets to plays, which I had little time to use. I had great temptations to write up certain speculative enterprises and never accepted one. My pay was simply despicably small [he was the sole literary editor], and there were editors in New York who for less work earned ten times my salary. When I returned to Philadelphia after my year in New York I had become familiarised with characteristic phases of American life and manners; but my father thought I had gone through a severe mill with rather doubtful characters.

But aside from these time-honoured accompaniments of the business side of the production of literature, there were spiritual by-products no less inevitable to a literary factory. The journalistic world of New York had begun to dig a wide gulf between itself and the Boëotian cities of Philadelphia and Boston. How else should it read its title clear? Fired by tales of returning sojourners in London and Paris, the town had learned what goes to the making of a metropolis. For a metropolis two items were indispensable—Bohemia within and “provinces” without. When duty whispered low thou must, the youth replied I can. Blushing for its callowness, it set about the job forthwith. It swaggered and posed and thought itself as devilish as any sophomore that ever coaxed a



moustache. Its sedulous Bohemianism of the cellarage variety shocked or bored the youthful immigrants from soberer North and West hastening for draughts from the fountain-head. There were several dashing strangers to set the pace for the home talent. "Frank Forester" was one of them—an Englishman compact of natural and cultivated eccentricities, author of picturesque historical novels very successful in their day, and editor of the *American Monthly*. He suited his action to his word in a manner that was satisfyingly typical—especially when he committed suicide at a banquet he had spread for his friends. This was not that *American Monthly* (by no means first or last of the name) which the young Park Benjamin had come from Boston to edit, bursting from the cocoon of the *New England* magazine. After a five-years career—during which the editor had established his metropolitanism by adopting the cut and thrust of Poe's critical tactics—it had been gathered to its fathers in 1838, long before the *Knickerbocker* dreamt of reincarnating under its title. Poor Knick! All unconscious of the irony its latter end would afford the remark, it had dismissed its younger rival with a courtly word of valedictory. "We regretted when it mingled politics with literature. It is in vain to wed the two in this country—a divorce is sure to succeed."

Scarcely less than Bohemianism, however, did cockneyism prove congenial to the taste of the New York literati. After all, the higher halo of a metropolis is its circlet of "provinces." [While Boston was quietly annexing all New England, New York had begun to label the outer world provincial. In 1841 Knick with its kindly superior smile had patted the *North American Review* upon its massive back, as it quoted some paragraphs which had been fortunate enough to meet with approbation. "We take pleasure in introducing it to the *public proper* in contradistinction to a small but select circle of readers in Boston and elsewhere." And of the first number of the *Dial*, it remarked indulgently: "There are good thoughts

here, but they are smothered in words, words. 'If your meats are good, what is the use of disguising them?' said a Yankee to a chef at Paris. 'For my part I should like to *know* what I eat.' Four pails of water to a turnip does not make an edifying soup." In 1844 Maria White wrote to Briggs, who was starting the *Broadway Journal*: "Both James and myself feel greatly interested in your journal, in spite of its proposed name. James told me to express his horror to you at the cockneyism of such a title. The Broadway Chronicle chronicles the thoughts and feelings of Broadway, not those of the New England people, whom you seem willing to receive somewhat from."

But in the metropolis, on Bohemians and cockneys as on gentlemen, there rested an unaccountable blight. New York could not even support her scholars, as Boston and Philadelphia had done.

The shifts and turns of the *Literary Review*, founded in 1822, the first literary periodical of pronounced merit since Brown's day, are typical of their scrabble for a living. R. C. Sands was its chief contributor. In 1824 the *Atlantic Magazine* was started and he was made editor. An amalgamation of the two starvelings was proposed in 1826, and the *New York Review and Athenæum* emerged from the melting pot. Bryant and Sands were the editors and had "the co-operation of several gentlemen, amply qualified to furnish the departments of Intelligence, Poetry, and Fiction." Bryant wrote to Dana: "My salary is \$1,000; no great sum to be sure, but it is twice what I got by my practice in the country. The business of sitting in judgment on books as they come out is not the literary employment most to my taste, nor that for which I am best fitted, but it affords me for the present a *certain* compensation, which is a matter of some consequence to a poor devil like myself." But he was counting his chickens before the hatching. His quarter ownership and his \$500 a year salary never amounted to that, and the prospective increase in real money never arrived.

Nor was what he had "certain." (Two more magazines the *Review* absorbed in its attempt to secure a New York public, and then the four-in-one migrated to Boston in hope of food; and here in speedy oblivion the five went down together. "Compared with the ample dimensions and vivacious contents of our later periodicals," says Parke Godwin, "it was but a meagre and dull affair. It wanted distinctiveness, perhaps aggressiveness of character. Its disquisitions were heavy. It was no doubt as good as any of its contemporaries, even the *North American*, on which it was modelled. In respect to poetry, it surpassed them all. Two subjects were given prominence in the prose department which greatly needed coddling, the Fine Arts and the Italian Opera."

Sedgwick had written of the editor of the *Atlantic Magazine*: "Bliss and White, his publishers, are liberal gentlemen; they pay him \$500 a year and authorise an expenditure of \$500 more." A first-class magazine for a thousand a year! The proprietors evidently counted upon the editor and "communications" furnishing the body of each number. This could, at a pinch, have been counted upon for several decades to come; and very often it was, whether editors were promised a salary and had a financial interest or not, and whether they got their salary when they had been promised it. The two editors of *Arcturus*, started in 1841, wrote almost all the early articles. This was the next notable attempt after Bryant's to make New York support a purely literary magazine. "*Arcturus*," wrote Lowell, "is as transcendental as Gotham can be."

Its sub-title was a *Journal of Books and Opinions*, and it was edited by Cornelius Mathews and Evert Duyckinck. It died as modestly as it was born. "The late James Smith in one of his humorous sketches said his hero was accustomed to lie like the prospectus of a new magazine," said they reticently as they began. At the end of the first year, the publisher still assured them there was enough in the pouch to pay travelling expenses, but

before another year the hopeful journey was ended. The magazine was an elegant one, and it left an impression deeper than many of much longer life. (Poe agreed with Dana that in many respects it was decidedly the best ever published in this country.

"It was on the whole *too good* to enjoy extensive popularity, although I am here using an equivocal phrase, for a better journal might have been far more acceptable to the public. It was excessively tasteful, but this character applies more to its external or mechanical appearance than to its essential qualities. Unhappily, magazines and other similar publications are in the beginning judged chiefly by externals. People saw *Arcturus* looking very much like other works which had failed through notorious dullness, although admitted as arbitri elegantiarum in all points of what is termed taste or decorum; and they had no patience to examine further. It cannot be said that it wanted *force*. It was deficient in power of expression, and this deficiency is to be attributed mainly to the exceeding brevity of its articles—a brevity that degenerated into mere paragraphism precluding dissertation or argument. The magazine had in fact some of the worst or most inconvenient features of a weekly literary newspaper. The mannerism to which I refer seems to have had its source in undue admiration and consequent imitation of the *Spectator*.

But Duyckinck thought he saw ultimate success in the very item which Poe deemed responsible for its failure; and five years later, in 1847, he established the *Literary World*, a weekly. It lasted until 1853. E. P. Whipple wrote Griswold that the new journal was better than anything we had had before; and that it would, if it succeeded and cut loose from all sectional and personal predilections, be a valuable aid to American literature. William Allen Butler wrote of it after Duyckinck's death: "The experience of a purely literary journal, dependent on its own merits and not on the patronage of a publishing house, and appealing rather to the sympathies than to the needs of that very small portion of the public which took satisfaction in a weekly presentation of the progress of ideas without reference to their own party politics, religious denomination, their craving for continuous fic-

tion, or their preference for woodcuts and caricatures, was not encouraging."

(The religious and literary periodical had been a very important early phenomenon in America.) Samuel Osgood could not understand why such a publication, at least, had been unable to get a firm foothold in a community so orthodox and theological. The *Literary and Theological Review* and the *New York Review* had both of them signally failed, while in Boston the *Christian Disciple* begun in 1813 and becoming the *Christian Examiner* in 1824 had kept flying the standard of liberal scholarship for a long and vital career. Possibly, he speculated, it was because Boston confided to it all new and debatable opinions. Certain it is that when later this paper based its hopes less upon liberal thought and sought refuge in more conventionally theological New York it went down after a few years' struggle in 1869.

The strange blight seemed to rest upon magazines of the entire period. Not only did very promising native infants peak and die, but older children who had been fairly hardy at home lost their individuality when they were taken to New York and attempted to acquire metropolitan dash and vim — which, after all, failed to harden them sufficiently to thrive on a starvation diet. Perhaps it was in some cases a rush of Bohemianism to the head; perhaps in others cockneyism produced a galloping consumption. Perhaps, as Poe thought with *Arcturus*, it was Spectatorism and dry-rot. But Samuel Osgood thought he was pronouncing a high eulogy upon Duyckinck when he said that that editor clung closely to the old English standards of culture and went in stoutly for a New York school that should be a full match at least for the rising New England literature: he meant *Arcturus* to be the bright and particular star of New York culture, and New York culture was Irving with his modified Addison. From 1815 to the beginning of the *Knickerbocker* in 1832 there were at least thirty New York magazines, not one of which even for a short

while flourished. "For years before we started," said that magazine in 1833, "New York had no periodical of any kind. Now we have four, not to mention others in embryo or rumour." But the second crop was like the first—almost all withered in metropolitan soil. And Philadelphia, with neither Bohemia nor provinces, kept chuckling to herself.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE WILLOWY WILLIS AND THE PIRATICAL POE IN NEW YORK

THE New York *Mirror*, into which Willis merged the Boston *American Monthly*, had been begun in 1823 by Morris and Woodworth. Samuel Woodworth is quoted daily by people who never heard his name, the author of a strain almost as familiar as Home Sweet Home. The lyrist of the Old Oaken Bucket had in 1812, as one of a "society of gentlemen," made an unsuccessful attempt to conduct a Swedenborgian magazine, the *Halcyon Luminary*, combining Swedenborg with polite literature. It may have been their song-writing that brought these two gentlemen together, for in 1823 Morris was a very handsomely paid balladist, getting fifty dollars for any song he wrote, cash before delivery; and it may have been the latter's worldliness which whirled them apart, for in 1825, Morris wrote *Briar Cliff*, a drama, for which he received the extraordinary sum of thirty-five hundred dollars. Only a year was Woodworth connected with the *Mirror*, and then Morris held it up to the town alone. For twenty years it conspicuously contributed to the literary, dramatic and artistic interests of New York. With all their jibing at the metropolis for her unsuccessful attempts in founding journals, neither Boston nor Philadelphia could show a literary weekly unconnected with a religious organisation, of anything like its longevity; and its temporary failure in 1842 was owing not to diminished vitality but to a series of wide-spread financial disasters.

It was in 1831 that Willis, disappointed in the tight purses of Boston culture, decided to take his dolls and leave home. "The apprenticeship which he had served

for two years in Boston," says R. H. Stoddard in his *Recollections*, "made him a master workman by the time he joined the staff of the New York *Mirror*. Its editors cast about for ways and means to increase its circulation and enlarge its narrow bank-account, and it was resolved over an oyster supper at the plebeian Delmonico's of that day, that Willis should travel abroad and write letters home. The moderate fortune of five hundred dollars was somehow scraped together and his passage was taken. He was to write fifty letters for five hundred dollars — upon which sum he would be expected to maintain himself like a gentleman in the capitals of Europe. His *Pencilings By the Way* were so popular that they were copied from the *Mirror* into hundreds of city and country journals." For four years he wrote weekly letters at ten dollars each. In January, 1839, Hawthorne promised Morris to furnish five stories for the *Mirror*.

For only one year did the *Mirror* remain darkened, and then, reburnished, it again reflected metropolitan life as the *New Mirror*. In 1844 it became a daily, the *Evening Mirror*, and in this shape lasted for two years longer. But in all its triplicate forms its light had been about the same. Its last change of name and issue, like the second, had not been made with the usual motive of pumping life into the moribund. Morris and Willis announced, in September, 1844, that they had been driven out of the field of weekly journalism by the United States Post Office. The *Mirror*, being stitched, could not be mailed at newspaper rates but was taxed at the caprice of postmasters from two to fifteen cents a copy; and this more than doubled the price to country readers and killed the mail subscription. To avoid this, the editors had decided to publish every day.

Protests against postal regulations had arisen ever since the press had been officially admitted to the mails and before then, when it had been admitted unofficially. When the service was established by the Government, it had refused to handle printed matter. The postmaster,



less stern, was in the habit of sending the newspaper on with the mails for nothing; and consequently 'when the bags were full he let them wait over. This occasioned many complaints — the mail was always late enough in any case, since the post never travelled at night. In 1790 there were seventy-five post-offices in the country, almost three times as many as there had been in 1776; and five years later there were four hundred and fifty-three. The tremendous rate of increase kept necessitating reorganisation of the system; and the Government, seeing that the riders were carrying the newspapers anyway, decided to get some revenue out of it. Consequently, newspapers were made mail matter in 1792. Having had their transportation for nothing, merely at the cost of inexpensive complaints on the part of subscribers at the delays under the old system, the newspapers naturally protested. They were alarmed, too, lest their circulation would be greatly cut down under the new law — particularly as this also allowed Congressmen to frank letters of information to their districts. The new law, however, did not harm the newspapers but worked hardship to the magazines, which it did not allow to enter the mails on the same footing with daily or weekly papers. The *Columbian*, at the end of 1792, announced that it could no longer exist under the oppression of paying letter rates, and the *American Museum* was discontinued also. In 1794 the postage rate on a single newspaper within its own State was reduced to one cent, and the regulation for other printed matter was somewhat ameliorated. When the size of the mail and the mode of conveyance would permit, magazines and pamphlets might be taken at the rate of one cent a sheet for fifty miles or less, half as much more for the next fifty, and for ten cents when the distance was over one hundred miles. This for magazines, which were invariably unable to collect their subscriptions at home, was something of a mockery. Nor, however limited their subscribers in number, did any of the superior magazines have only a local circulation.

The *National Magazine* published at Richmond in 1799 had returned thanks in the second number for an order of fifty-five copies from Georgia and sixty-six from Connecticut. It apologised for the delay in getting out this number, although a semi-quarterly, because of the time necessary to secure correspondencies and communications from so wide an area. Beginning with ninety-six octavo pages, it ended as a weekly quarto pamphlet of twelve pages, printed in the District of Columbia for convenience of transportation. The publisher announced that he had been led to take this step because of the difficulty in distributing so large a number — in the back countries sometimes months elapsed before it was received, and the publication was so bulky that it was refused admittance to the mail except on the main line, and even there it had been very unwelcome. "The year 1804," says Mr. McMaster, "may be taken arbitrarily as the beginning of a new epoch in the history of magazine enterprise. The opening of the mail to books and packages enabled the magazine publishers to find a larger class of general readers and also a large class whose interests were centred on a common object or profession. Then, for the first time, magazines devoted to particular interests began to appear in quick succession. Medicine, theology, law, were, of course, the three professions thus exploited. The *American Law Journal*, of Baltimore, in 1809, the second in the English language, was the first native product of the new law in the Legal profession." The few specialised theological and medical magazines which had a struggling existence before this date had depended on local patronage; but doctors in the large cities had more money than lawyers, and the theological magazines appealed of course to laymen also. Even an *American Musical* magazine had, in New Haven, tried for a year to gain a foothold in 1786.

The slowness of the mails was shown in the Post Master General's answer to the petitions that snowed him under in 1811 and continued to pelt him for three years

(and, indeed, in a steady though milder fashion until 1830). They were petitions that the opening of the post-offices for the assortment of mail during one hour on Sunday — not during divine service — be stopped. He said that if this was done, letters would be delayed five days between Boston and New Orleans, three days between Washington and New Orleans, and two days between Washington and St. Louis; and that since travelers would patronise lines which did not carry the mails and were not held up on Sunday, it would end in letters being carried, as formerly, by private hands. Nor were lengthy delays by any means over when coaches went out and railroads came in. In the *National Era* of Washington in 1850 occurs this item: "The Eastern and Western mails last week failed to reach this place at the proper time, every other day. If this happened on the great routes leading directly to this city, what must be the condition of things in other parts of the country. And when we recollect that a failure to connect at certain points may delay mail matter from three to seven days, certainly some of our subscribers will hardly wonder at the irregularity with which they receive their paper. At some points, we are apprised by correspondents that we have nearly lost all our subscribers in consequence of these inexcusable irregularities." Between proprietors who found it unprofitable to publish a magazine on account of the postal regulations and subscribers who found it unprofitable to take from a distance weekly periodicals which might also be long staled before delivery, the editor had more foes to face than his chief enemy, the delinquent, of whom he was always complaining.

But to return to Willis, the conversion of whose *Mirror* from a weekly to a daily has occasioned this long digression. When he came back from his first long absence abroad, he took up the editorial function he had not held since he left Boston; and at the same time established the *Corsair*. This paper he did not intend to compete, except incidentally, with the *Mirror* — it was to exist

entirely on foreign plunder, chiefly English. It was meant to share some of the goodly pickings with other weeklies, like *Brother Jonathan* and the *New World*, which were gorging a fat crop with English grain. Nor, fume as he might at the absence of the international copyright which allowed and compelled him to do this, was Willis as oblivious as other editors of similar publications to the moral right of English authors to some foreign revenue from their works. For, while in London, he had engaged Thackeray to write for it at five dollars a close column. The *Corsair* was scuttled by those land-rats, unpaid subscriptions, during his second trip abroad; and it was after his return that the *Mirror* was changed to a daily. The final failure of this seems to have been due to a temporary break-down of its energetic young editor. Willis was in the odd predicament of having to balance the demands of his handsome exchequer against those of his paternal pride in the success of his paper. He could hardly afford to write for himself. Even in 1841 Godey was paying him at the rate of fifty dollars for four close-printed pages, thought by most people to be the largest sum a magazine could ever pay; in 1842 he was writing an article a month for four separate magazines and receiving one hundred dollars for each. To turn from such lucrative business to grinding out material for his own pages, may have weekly caused him a conflict of emotions that would have worn out even a jauntier man. And to bid farewell to such golden harvests for the uncertain destiny of the *Home Journal* in 1847 (started also by Morris in 1845, as the *National Press*) was the acme of rash self-denial. But the *Home Journal* rewarded his third adventure in paternity, for it proved a great pecuniary success as well as a literary one. It also set out to be the organ of the "town," and with for editor a Petronius who had eager reception in the most exclusive circles, it resplendently succeeded. Furthermore, it did not as a rule pay anything for outside contributions and frankly said so. It

paid its own editorial staff, and no one else. Willis had found that it was no use trying to be quixotic under the hard conditions of the pursuit of literature in America. Possibly he did not try very hard, although he was as righteously indignant as any at the law which fostered such conditions. He had surmounted them by the hardest kind of industry, and others must do the same. If youngsters waxed wrathful at his cool appropriation of their wares when they were unknown and his cool dismissal of them when they were able to claim some compensation, he pleasantly reminded them how recently the magazine had reiterated that it did not pay for contributions. In 1846 he wrote to a youngster in the first stage: "As to writing for the magazines, that is very nearly done for as a matter of profit. The competition for notoriety alone gives the editors more than they can use. You could not *sell* a piece of poetry now in America. The literary avenues are all overcrowded, and you cannot live by the pen, except as a drudge to a newspaper."

More picturesque and almost as assured in physical bearing as was Willis in social dictation, was his brother editor in so many ventures, General Morris. "There was something imposing and impressive in his personal appearance," says Stoddard. "He had a broad-padded chest and a bulky waist whose amplitude of girth was encircled by a military belt, which supported the long and dangerous weapon that dangled from it." Yet familiarity breeds contempt even with the girth of a general thus encircled, and Willis had the temerity to quarrel with this gentleman because during an absence, his co-editor had made free with his commas — a righteous rage which Holmes could well sympathise with. And in the quarrel the pen of Willis proved mightier than the sword of Morris. Mr. Charles Taber Congdon has in his *Reminiscences* an appreciation of the man who for years was our top-notch as a successful man of letters. "Willis never had anything to do with politics, probably

he did not know much about them; but his editorial work did a good deal to correct the somewhat savage and coarse style of the prevailing journalism of the period. [Nor was the savagery confined to style alone. The dashing John Daniel, assistant editor of the Richmond *Examiner* about 1848, had fought nine pistol duels on account of his brilliant partisan attacks in his paper.] If the matter of his articles had been as good as the manner and if he had not principally confined himself to evanescent topics, he would have made a fame equal to that of Addison or Washington Irving. But he could write about hats and coats, parties and receptions, and all manner of fashionable tweedledum and tweedledee. He was intensely egotistical, but then it was always in a graceful and well-bred way. He was unmistakably foppish in his work; but somehow you could not help feeling there was a degree of manliness under it all, and here and there a great cropping out of common sense. He had in a large measure that best faculty of a journalist; he knew what people would like to read. He was lied about and libelled, but it never seemed very much to disturb his equanimity."

As Willis had expended his youthful energies upon his *American Monthly* in Boston, so young Park Benjamin after vainly endeavouring to keep afloat the *New England* in that city had come to the metropolis to recoup his fortunes with the *American Monthly* of New York. On it he spent what little of his patrimony the Boston maw had not devoured. After its failure, he joined the *New Yorker* with Greeley. This had appeared in 1834 and planned to combine literature, politics, statistics, and general intelligence. Greeley said in his farewell address in 1841, as he merged the paper into the *Weekly Tribune*, that at times he had been aided in the literary department by gentlemen of decided talent and eminence—Park Benjamin and Hoffman and Griswold—but at others the entire conduct had rested with him; and he said also that delinquent subscribers owed him ten thousand dol-

lars. Then Benjamin joined Epes Sargent with the *New World*, begun in 1835. "This was, I think," says Stoddard, "the first paper of the kind ever published in New York, and was admirable for what it was and what it was intended to be; namely, the speediest and cheapest reprint of the most popular British authors." It republished English magazine literature wholesale, it is true, yet Stoddard's statement is by no means fair, as it had also many original departments conducted by prominent writers. It would have to be speedy, indeed, to compete with certain of the publishers. Marcus Butler of Harpers wrote Griswold in 1836: "Bulwer's drama is not in yet; we expect it every day — we have our cases filled and all the quads and italics in the office collected together, ready for the contest as soon as we receive the copy. We executed the entire work of Lucien Bonaparte and published it in forty hours after we received the copy, and sold it at three shillings. We did not leave the office from Tuesday noon until Wednesday morning at nine. I am pretty well used up, I assure you."

The success of the *New World* led to many cheaper similar enterprises which had for a time a marked effect on the book-trade. The mammoth pages of the paper were a compromise between the largest printing press and the lowest postal rate, which still reckoned by the sheet. "I have written to Park Benjamin to send you his new paper, a monstrous sheet, full of all that is going on here; by far the best paper I see," wrote Longfellow in 1840 to a foreign correspondent. "I wrote immediately to New York about your letters from Rome, but not to the *Knickerbocker*, because it has been in trouble and not able to pay anybody. I wrote to Sargent. After some delay, I got an answer showing that nobody pays nowadays. 'The fact is that all our publishers, whether of books or periodicals, are desperately poor at present; money is not to be had.' And this is very true. You have no idea of the state of things. My publisher [Colman] has failed. Most publishers will not look at

a book. Clark writes me that the *Knickerbocker*, that is, the business part of it — will be in new hands. He has not paid me for three years. Poor fellow, he has had a hard time, and been almost desperate, I fear." Stoddard says that while there was certainly no money in the *Knickerbocker* for its contributors, its jaunty editor managed to live out of it and live well, his enemies said; for if cash was not abundant with him, credit was — and what could a happy-go-lucky fellow want besides an abundance of credit? In 1840, Park Benjamin wrote to Longfellow: "Your ballad 'The Wreck of the Hesperus' is grand. Enclosed are twenty-five dollars, the sum you mentioned for it, paid by the proprietors of the *New World*, in which glorious paper it will resplendently coruscate on Saturday next. Of all American journals, the *New World* is alone worthy to contain it." For some time to come, Benjamin and Samuel Ward acted as brokers to the Cambridge poet, who, in his gentle way had all the New England horror of commerce and all the New England desire to benefit thereby, so long as such shocking debasement of the muse had to be. He was a firm believer in the sacred dictum that you may lead Pegasus to water, but you should not make him drink. In 1837 comes this amusing item in his letters. "Willis is writing a tragedy to order for Miss Clifton, who gives him a thousand dollars. I can hardly tell you how sorry I am for this. Why not order a dozen as well as one?" But austere as was the creed of the cult, Longfellow was never unhuman enough to refuse the large prices which his friends had bargained for — even when his poems were printed in the New York *Ledger*. In 1841 between him and his two friendly brokers the mails were busy. "I had no sooner sealed and sent my last, with Endymion asleep under its leaves," he wrote to Ward in September, "than who should come in but Park Benjamin himself! I told him what I had done, whereat he expressed great grief; and to console him, I promised to write you and cry, Stop that poem! If, therefore,



it is not already in the paws of *Arcturus* or the claws of Old Nick, you may send it to Benjamin." In November, he wrote: "A letter from Park Benjamin to-day. He wants two poems (orders two pair of boots!) and offers twenty dollars each. If you have not disposed of Charles River, send it to him. If you have, send one of the others." Later the same month, comes a little mix-up in the three-handed partnership. "O'Sullivan is to have the God's Acre [for the *Democratic Review*]. That is right; and now all will doubtless flow on harmoniously. Benjamin has doubtless been in some perplexity between my negotiations with him and yours." Park wrote to the poet, thus ideally poetising within an enchanted garden so near and yet so far from the vulgar mart, that he had sold the Goblet of Life and the River Charles for forty dollars. He had not taken them himself because he did not particularly like them and because the *New World* had just entered into costly arrangements for a correspondence in England. He asked Longfellow to furnish an occasional prose article and poem for *Graham's*, "of which Poe is one editor. It is by far the best of this class of periodicals and will pay liberally and punctually." Earlier in the year, Poe himself had asked Longfellow for something each month, "length and subject *à discretion*. In respect to terms, we would gladly offer you *carte blanche*; and the periods of payment should also be made to suit yourself." Longfellow had then declined, on account of preoccupation with other work. Constant dripping wears away even crystal, however, and the services of Benjamin coupled with his praise of the Philadelphia magazine seemed to have conquered the poet at last. In 1843 he wrote a letter which throws some light on the cost of those illustrations and "embellishments" which were always moving the dignified and unembellished magazines to tears or jeers. "In the next number of *Graham's* is an unlikeness of me—a ridiculous caricature. As soon as it was sent to me I wrote Graham to have it suppressed, but too late. It

was printed and had cost him some five hundred dollars and he was not willing to lose so much money. You will be amused and perhaps a little vexed afterward, when you see what a picture is distributed over the country, to the number of forty thousand, as my portrait." In 1844 he wrote to an editor, "My engagements with Mr. Graham [to write exclusively for him] prevent me from taking any part in your proposed magazine."

Griswold said the *Democratic Review* in 1837 had become the most successful political magazine in the country. It had had a somewhat significant history in its journey toward literature. As long as its material had been all gratuitous, it remained extremely partisan in both contributions and readers; when it paid for articles, it published a better grade of material and was read by both parties alike. Whig writers, noting both of these phenomena, overcame their prejudices and contributed. When Brownson merged the Boston *Quarterly Review* into the *Democratic*, he told his subscribers that they would obtain as much matter for five dollars as he had furnished them for twelve or fifteen. "Five years' experience has attended the editor, and his brilliant success justifies our estimation of his worth and ability. In addition to his own essays, it is enriched by contributions from the first literary men in the country. As organ of the Democratic party it has, of course, a decided political character, but it is a magazine and devoted principally to general literature. In it, we intend publishing our general system of philosophy and metaphysics. It stands already at the head of the monthly magazines in this country. If anything could make us not regret parting with our own Review, it is that we are to aid in a work so respectable and be in some measure also united with a man, scholar, and politician whom we so highly esteem as its accomplished and independent editor."

The dilution of the fiery liquor of its earlier partisanship may not have proceeded from their disappointment in being awarded the government printing in Washing-

ton. They had naturally counted on receiving so paltry an amount of it as to cover their risks at least, in accordance with the time-honoured practice in Washington of giving it to political friends. But at any rate when they resumed publication in 1840 after their failure, and moved to New York, they had larger journalistic aims. Lowell, that year when he hoped to make his four hundred dollars all told, had arranged with O'Sullivan for ten or fifteen dollars a poem. That same year, 1842, O'Sullivan was writing to Griswold that he had in spite of his large circulation sustained heavy losses "from inexperience, dishonest agents, widely extended credit in the subscriptions, and the depreciation and irregularity of the currency in which they received payment, which was often at fifty per cent. discount." And the following year Thoreau said that he had knocked vainly at the door of the magazine. "Were it not for its ultraism in politics," said Poe that year, "we should regard the *Democratic Review* the most valuable journal of the day. Its editor is a man of fine matter-of-fact talents, and a good political writer though not a brilliant one. The principal contributors are Brownson, the new-light philosopher, Bancroft, Whittier, Bryant, Hawthorne, and Miss Sedgwick. The department of criticism is conducted in a candid, sensible and upright manner. Besides the notices of new books accompanying each number, it generally contains two or three elaborate reviews, which make it an agreeable work for a man of letters. And as to its embellishments (for everything must be *pictured* into the world nowadays!) we consider them of the most truly valuable kind, being accurate and well-executed portraits of eminent men. Most highly, indeed, do we esteem the *Democratic Review*, and take it all in all, we acknowledge only three as its superiors in any country; namely, *Tait's Magazine*, *Frazer*, and *Blackwood*, and these it will fully equal when it has the advantage of their experience."

It was not until 1845 that the Whigs had a Review of

their own. And to the attractions of party loyalty it added substantial payment—more than its finances would bear, it said in the fourth volume, though in their opinion inadequate enough, but still in the aggregate a larger sum than any other periodical had paid for its contributions. Colton's *American Review* (1845-1850), at least the third New Yorker of that name, was a dignified and able journal of the statelier sort, as became a five dollar publication. Its idea of the mission of letters was a high one. "Our literature has never been sufficiently in earnest. It has been too much the product of light moments. We confess to an almost total distrust of the judgments of critical work in America; and a sea of trash seems rapidly swallowing up the delicate perception and calm thought both of critics and people." Its idea of nationality in our literature was likewise a high one. "A very considerable class of persons have the same opinion of our own that the German people have of English genius. The English, said Goethe, never think. Now, we hold our own good minds equal to the best of these days. It is a common error to suppose that great advances in arts, letters and philosophy are made by the isolated labour of a few astonishing individuals; it is the people from whom they spring that have made the advance possible. The conduct of the literary department of the Review presents difficulties which will not be overcome until a change takes place in public opinion in regard to the comparative merits of foreign and American intellects." In both of these Reviews the political articles were pronounced enough, but you could not have told from the abundant literary articles and the verse which one of them you were reading. They had not been edited with a purpose, as had been the *National Review* at the beginning of the century.

Handsome praise from Poe was his tribute to the *Democratic*; and, as with every magazine that he praised or blamed, it must be taken with suspicion and at the same time with the knowledge that more than any other

magazinist of the period his judgment, if it could be properly disencumbered of its personal prejudice, was of value. Poe's New York dates, in spite of the amount of biographical attention he has received, share the confusion of the entire shifty period. He joined the staff of the New York *Quarterly* in 1837 and continued there the ferocity of his earlier critical work on the *Messenger*. In 1838 he moved to Philadelphia and returned to New York in 1844. First, he became sub-editor and critic on the *Mirror*. Here Willis praised his industry and fidelity. During his time on the *Mirror* he published The Raven in the *American Review*, for which he got ten dollars. It was in 1841 that he praised this magazine on *Godey's*. "It is now commencing its second year; and I can say from my own personal knowledge that its circulation exceeds two thousand — it is probably about two thousand five hundred. So marked and immediate a success has never been attained by any of our five dollar magazines with the exception of the *Southern Literary Messenger*, which in the course of nineteen months (subsequent to the seventh from its commencement) attained a circulation of rather more than five thousand." These months marked, of course, the duration of Poe's connection with the journal.

He left the *Mirror* in 1845 to assist on the just started *Broadway Journal*. The chief editor of this was C. F. Briggs. "We have chosen the name," ran the first editorial, "because it is indicative of the spirit which we intend shall characterise our paper. Broadway is confessedly the first street in the first city of the New World. As Paris is France and London, England; so is Broadway, New York. And New York is fast becoming, if she be not already, America; in spite of South Carolina and Boston. We shall do what we can to render it in some degree worthy of the name we have given it. We shall endeavour to make it entirely original, and instead of the effete vapours of English magazines, which have heretofore been the chief filling of our weekly journals, give

such homely thoughts as may be generated among us." Maria Lowell wrote Briggs that James was shocked at the title, and James's feelings may be gathered from a letter he had written Briggs the year before. "New York letters are becoming very fashionable. You Gothamites strain hard to attain a metropolitan character, but I think if you *felt* very metropolitan you would not be showing it on all occasions. I see that the exponent of your city, the *Herald*, speaks of the Philadelphia papers as 'the provincial press!'" Regarding Brigg's new venture came this letter in 1845. "I received this morning two numbers of your *Broadway Journal*, and am in haste to tell you how much I like it. As to the arrangement you propose [Briggs had written "Poe writes for me at the rate of one dollar a column. If you will do so, I shall esteem it a capital bargain"], I know not what to say. In spite of your surmise, I am so little in the habit of measuring what I do by dollars and cents that nothing is harder for me than to set a value on my wares. I know nothing of your ability, and I should certainly steer by that if I were better informed. For Columbus I should expect more than for prose. But I had a thousand times rather give it to you (as it would be my natural impulse to do) than think you had paid me more for it than you could easily afford. All I ask for is enough for necessities. Graham will no doubt give me (as he has done) thirty dollars for a poem. The Anti-Slavery Friends pay me five dollars for a leader to their paper, making ten dollars a month while I am here." This was in Philadelphia and the paper was the *Freeman*. The next month he wrote: "I do not know whether to be glad or sorry that you have associated Poe and Watson with you as editors. I do not know the last; the first certainly is able; but I think there should never be more than one editor with any proprietary control over the paper. Its individuality is not generally so well preserved."

In July, the paper went under the sole charge of Poe.

He bought it from Briggs for fifty dollars — on a note signed by Greeley, who paid it in the end. In August, Lowell wrote to Briggs: "Poe, I am afraid, is wholly lacking in that element of manhood which, for want of a better name, we call *character*. As I prognosticated, I have made him my enemy by doing him a service. In the last *Broadway Journal* he has accused me of plagiarism, and *misquoted* Wordsworth to sustain the charge. He wishes to kick down the ladder by which he rose. He is welcome. Now, how can I expect to be understood, much more to have my poetry understood, by such a man as Poe? I cannot understand the meanness of men. They seem to trace everything to selfishness. Why, B—— actually asked Carter how much Poe paid me for writing my notice of him in *Graham's*. Did such baseness ever enter the head of man?" During his editorship, Poe wrote a large portion of the *Journal* himself, and some of his stories appeared in it, notably the Tell Tale Heart. But he was not able financially to keep the breath of life in it. One of Stoddard's recollections is of this time. Stoddard called upon him at his house, not finding him at the office, and was received with great courtliness and told that the Ode on a Grecian Flute — Stoddard's first poem — would be published next week. Next week's issue had this notice, "To the author of the Lines on the Grecian Flute; we fear that we have mislaid the poem." A week later came this notice: "We doubt the originality of the Grecian Flute, for the reason that it is too good at some points to be so bad at others. Unless the author can reassure us, we decline it." Stoddard called to reassure. "Poe started and glared at me and shouted 'You lie, damn you! Get out of here, or I'll throw you out!'" "The Bells," says Stoddard, "was sold thrice and paid for every time; Annabel Lee was sold twice, and was printed by Griswold before it could appear either in *Sartain's* or the *Southern Literary Messenger*." Thomas Dunn English wrote that Poe had no sense of right and wrong whenever need or resentment

provoked him, and could no more be held responsible for many things he did than could a lunatic or an idiot. He adds that the poor fellow rarely received five hundred dollars a year for his work — so his need was as constant as his resentment.

As Poe had lied about or had unfortunate business dealings with almost every literary personage in New York and many of its magazines, the uproar that was created by an article of his signed "L" in the *New World* March 4th, 1843, can be imagined. It set out to survey the magazines. The most prominent, he said, were the *Democratic Review*, the *Knickerbocker*, *Graham's*, *Lady's Book*, *Sargents*, *Pioneer*, *Lady's Companion*, *Southern Messenger*. The first he praised highly, as we have seen; the second he dismissed as a poor ruin of former greatness; the third and fourth — Philadelphia magazines — he treated with indulgent gentleness and some pity; the *Southern Literary Messenger* had diffused more valuable information throughout the Union than any other literary work for the past five years, but alas, its honest, worthy, and hard-working originator was no more, and he trusted that an able editor would speedily be employed to secure to it its former high standing. The resuscitation of *Knickerbocker* and the preservation of the *Southern* might both have been secured, one conceives, by an editor near at hand whom Poe could name if pressed. The editor of *Sargent's* came in for almost as much savage derision as Lewis Clark of *Knickerbocker*. The editor of the *Lady's Companion*, which Thoreau had just been saying was the only magazine that paid him, had the presumption to be a foreigner, and the journal he edited was a receptacle of nonsense from first to last, of picture nonsense, fashion nonsense, poetical nonsense, and prose nonsense — a work of no beneficial influence whatever, which ought to be annihilated.

"In speaking of the mass of matter in the above-mentioned periodicals, it can only be designated as sentimental, love-sick, or fashionable stories and unmeaning



rhymes. Who can deny that an exceedingly bad influence is exerted by our magazine literature? Thousands of articles are published which instead of instructing the youthful mind 'please with a rattle, tickle with a straw'; instead of instilling a sound morality, they inculcate a neglect of everything that is valuable; instead of making the poor contented with their condition, they descant upon the luxury of fashion and wealth, causing a thousand hearts bitterly to ache for an imaginary want. Is not this kind of literature a nuisance? Let every man who believes that the tendency of this literature is bad, refrain from purchasing the magazines which publish it. As to those who tax their brains to produce this literature, let them enjoy their only legitimate reward — the flattery of fools, foolish young men and foolish young women. Let every person who acknowledges such men as Ingraham and Willis (Willis we mean as he is now — not as he was formerly) and such women as Helen Berkeley and all their followers — let all such people, we say, be laughed at for their taste. The light literature of our present day, particularly as disseminated in our fashionable magazines, is almost without a single redeeming quality."

This general verdict time has confirmed. And though Poe was the last one to throw stones at an editor who himself filled most of his magazine, or reprinted articles that he had used elsewhere, or who was reduced to shifty practices through poverty and greed, or who praised good markets; or even at authors who turned out meaningless rhymes by the wholesale or were specialists in the style of fiction they had helped to create; although he was, in short, a rebel consistent in nothing save rebellion — he was the most energetic and achieving protestant of his time in a cause which the next decade set about more wisely and temperately to carry.

The best summing up of the Willis and Poe period is found in an English magazine article in 1848. It was written by Charles Astor Bristed, a New Yorker and a

writer for American magazines, who was what few New York writers of the period were, a cosmopolitan with a point of view limited neither to America nor to Broadway. It was a comment somewhat different from one that had appeared in the *Derbyshire Courier* in 1835, "One peculiar difference between our periodicals and those of America is this—ours are always dear and sometimes indifferent: across the Atlantic they are always cheap and usually good." From Bristed's lively, forceful, and just article some paragraphs may be quoted as fit pendant for Poe's.

"Of American reviews and magazines British readers very seldom hear anything. This is certainly not owing to the scarcity of these productions for they are as numerous in comparison as the newspaper, have a very respectable circulation (in many cases forty thousand) and that at the not remarkably low price of four or five dollars. Nor is it due to the fact that their topics are exclusively local, for there is scarcely a subject under heaven which they do not treat; and a European might derive some very startling information from them. The *Democratic Review*, for example, has a habit of predicting twice or thrice a year that England is on the point of exploding utterly and going off into absolute chaos. 'Perhaps,' interrupts an impatient non-admirer of things American generally, 'they are not worth hearing about!' And this suggestion is not so far from truth as it is from politeness.

"In examining the causes of the inferiority of American periodical literature, the most readily assignable and generally applicable is that its contributions are mostly unpaid. It is pretty safe to enunciate as a general rule that when you want a good thing you must pay for it. Now, the reprint of English magazines can be sold for two dollars per annum, whereas a properly supported home magazine cannot be afforded for less than four or five. Hence, no one will embark a large capital in so doubtful an undertaking; and periodical editorship is

generally a last resource or a desperate speculation. One of the leading magazines in New York — perhaps on the whole the most respectable and best conducted — was started with a *borrowed* capital of three hundred dollars. The proprietors of a magazine should have a fair sum in hand to begin with, to secure the services of able and eminent men to make a good start. At the same time, the editor finds at his disposal a most tempting array (so far as quantity and variety are concerned) of gratuitous contributions. For there is in America a mob of men and women who write with ease. The system of compositions and orations at school and college makes them 'writers' before they know how to read and gives them a manner before they can have acquired matter. Most of these people are sufficiently paid by the glory of appearing in print. The specific evils of this system of providing material are that it prevents an editor from standing on a proper footing toward his contributors, who feel that they are doing a charitable, patronising, or at least a very friendly act in contributing; and it stands in the way of honest criticism, for he who cannot pay in dollars must pay in flattery. Other influences conspire to pervert and impede criticism. Very few of the American periodical writers, professed or occasional, are liberally educated. The popular education tends to platitudes and commonplace. Their reading is chiefly of new books, a most uncritical style of reading. The democratic influence moulds all men to think unlike, and Mrs. Grundy is a very important estate in the republic. Then there are very powerful interests all ready to take offence and cry out. The strongest editor is afraid of some of these. One great aim of an American magazine is to tread on nobody's toes, or as their circulars phrase it 'to contain nothing which shall offend the most fastidious.' Accordingly, nearly all the magazines and reviews profess and practice political neutrality; and the two or three exceptions depend almost entirely on their political articles and partisan circulation. We know one editor who

is continually apologising to his subscribers and one half of his correspondents for what the other half write.

“Another enemy of true criticism in America is provincialism. The country is parcelled out in small cliques, who settle things in their own way in their own particular districts. Thus, there are shining lights in Boston who are ‘small potatoes’ in New York, and ‘most remarkable’ men in the West whom no one has remarked in the East. Sometimes, indeed, these cliques contrive to ramify and extend their influence by a regular system of ‘tickle me and I’ll tickle you,’ which there is not even an endeavour to conceal. For instance, when the classical lion of a certain clique had been favourably reviewed by a gentleman in another city, whose opinion was supposed to be worth something, the periodical organ of the clique publicly expressed its thanks for the favour, and in return dug up a buried novel of the critic’s and did its best to resuscitate it by a vigorous puff. The exceptions to indiscriminate praise in American reviewing usually spring from private misunderstandings. Two literateurs on a magazine quarrel, one of them is kicked out of doors, and then they begin to *criticise* each other’s writings. And the consequence is that it is next to impossible to pass an unfavourable opinion upon anything without having personal motives attributed to you. When an author is condemned, the first step is to find out the writer of the review and assail him on personal grounds. Also, there are often disputes about unsettled accounts, which have an awkward tendency to influence the subsequent critical and editorial opinions of both parties.

“Such are some of the causes which militate against the attainment of high standard in American periodical literature. For some years it went on very swimmingly *on credit*, but it is doubtful if the experiment could be successfully repeated. Since it is plain that the republi-

cation of English magazines must interfere with the home article, the passing of an International Copyright law would be the greatest benefit which could be conferred on American periodical literature."

## CHAPTER VII

### THE WAVES OF THE ATLANTIC

It is difficult at first glance to see why the Boston literati almost to a man should have despaired of establishing there a first-class all-round literary magazine. What Leland said when he was residing there in 1862, its brilliant circle at the brightest, could have been said with equal truth at any time in the previous twenty years. Leland had lived in several European capitals and in Philadelphia and New York; and was thus an expert witness for the defence. Moreover, he did not particularly care for Boston — which makes his testimony all the stronger. “In the very general respect manifested in all circles in Boston for culture and knowledge in every form, it is certainly equalled by no city on earth.” This being the case, why then did the projector of a first-class magazine — publisher or author — invariably fear that such a community would fail to support it?

Leland's next sentence may afford a clue. “Every stranger has a verdict or judgment passed on him, he is numbered and labelled at once, and it is really wonderful how in a few days the whole town knows of it.” Cultivated Boston was a village community: it was always foregathering at various meeting-places and swapping opinions. And it had the thrifty village habit of passing its books around also. It distinctly believed in neighbourhood copies. Emerson — who remembered with chagrin that he couldn't find five hundred buyers for the *Dial* in spite of all the eager discussion about it — might have been thinking of this when he wrote in 1850 that a New England magazine was an impossible problem. Well might Higginson, on a lecture tour in the West, record

in 1867 his amazement at the support given to the New England magazine which was at last successfully established. "I have heard of a little town in northern Iowa where there were fifty houses and twenty-five copies of the *Atlantic*." That was not the sort of thing he was accustomed to: people were far more neighbourly in Cambridge and Boston.

Fifteen years before the *Atlantic* was begun, Lowell had attempted to do much the same sort of thing in the *Pioneer*; the immediate occasion of its suspension was Lowell's breakdown with eye-strain, but starvation had already set in. Three years before that, in 1839, Hawthorne had written Longfellow, "I saw Mr. Sparks some time since and he said that you were thinking of a literary paper. Why not? Your name would go a great way toward insuring its success; and it is intolerable that there should not be a single belles-lettres journal in New England." Cultivated New England was too busy making contributions to every cause in Christendom to support the "embodiment of the national literature" it was always complacently talking about.

Thus the canny projector of the *Atlantic* in allowing it to be considered as the organ of the anti-slavery party, sought to enlist not only ready pens but reluctant pennies. He was hitching his star to a wagon. Boston had tried the purely literary "periodical" and failed to float it even when buoyed up with fashion-plates. It would now see what a double-header might do. Says Scudder's Lowell:

Its founders did not conceal their intention to make it a political magazine. It bore as its sub-head a title it has never relinquished, "A Magazine of Literature, Art, and Politics." But the magazine did not become, as it might in lesser hands, a mere propaganda of reform or the organ of a political party; neither did it assume an air of philosophical absenteeism. The space given to the discussion of affairs was not considerable, but the subjects were chosen with deliberation and treated with a good deal more than newspaper care. They were intended to have the incisiveness of brilliant newspaper work and a breadth not to be looked for in a newspaper.

In this age of magazines, wrote J. T. Trowbridge, it is difficult to imagine the interest excited by the advent of the long-expected *Atlantic*. Colonel Higginson says it was really planned in 1853, but was stayed four years by the business failure of J. P. Jewett and Company, who were to have been its publishers.

The present editor of the magazine says that the whole plan of it was originated by the "editor who never was the editor," Francis H. Underwood, and but for the failure of the projected publishers he would have enjoyed the full credit for the enterprise. At the failure and the consequent collapse of the plan, Lowell wrote him, "I think this Mr. Jew-it ought to be — that something ought to be done to him, but for that matter, nearly all book-sellers stand in the same condemnation." Underwood now entered the counting-room of Phillips, Sampson and Company. In the meantime, through all the years of its frustration, the idea had been slowly growing, "Why should not Boston have a Monthly of her own?" Boston felt — all the more because she showed it in no other way — her inferiority in this respect to her rivals New York and Philadelphia. Each of these barbarian cities had a trinity of graces — Philadelphia with *Graham's*, *Godey's*, and *Sartain's* (although the Boston literati thought them all vapourish and simpering), New York with the hoary *Knickerbocker*, and the adolescent *Harper's* and *Putnam's* — while Boston, the centre of American literature, did not possess and had really never possessed a magazine of her own which could be agreeable for her best writers and at the same time appeal to popular support. But Underwood began now to develop a surprising social popularity (for a business clerk) among the Cambridge-Boston literary group; and with the idea of his magazine always in mind he set to work to become a mediator between this group and his new firm, which was already identified with some of Boston's best literary interests. Sampson had died about 1852, and the other partner of



Phillips in 1857 was William Lee, who had been for many years the senior partner in Lee and Shepard.

Here let Scudder's Lowell take up the story:

Phillips had the practical man's distrust of new enterprises suggested by authors, and a temperament calculated to chill enthusiasm. Underwood, reader for the firm, had already received a pledge of support from Lowell, Longfellow, Holmes, and others; and he represented strongly to Lee the possibility of the magazine which should start out with a staff of such eminent writers. Phillips having been won over, plans were rapidly pushed. Phillips wrote a letter to his niece telling her of the dinner he gave to talk the project over. "We sat down at three P. M. and rose at eight. The time occupied was longer by about four hours and thirty minutes than I am in the habit of consuming in that kind of occupation, but it was the richest time intellectually by all odds that I have ever had. The exact arrangement of the table was as follows:

Mr. Underwood		
Cabot		Lowell
Motley		Holmes
Longfellow		Emerson
Phillips		

Each one is known alike on both sides of the Atlantic and is read beyond the limits of the English language. Though I say it as shouldn't, it was the proudest day of my life."

Nevertheless, the cautious Mr. Phillips would not make up his mind until he had seen Mrs. Stowe, who was at that moment in England. He had unbounded admiration for her; and they had been for some years on exceedingly friendly terms. She rarely came to town without calling upon him, although she did not extend her cordiality to every one in the house. Though it was Jewett who had taken the risk of publishing *Uncle Tom's Cabin* — indeed, put the idea into her head while it was running as a serial — and on the other hand Phillips had declined it when she had offered it to him, she had, on receiving an intimation that Phillips would not decline a second book from her (a lady who had sold three thousand copies on the day of publication!), gladly given him in 1854 *Sunny Memories*, and in 1856 *Dred*. Now she conferred at once

upon the project her doubly distinguished support, and promised to write for the magazine. Underwood afterward told Arthur Gilman that she was the last straw that had broken the back of the camel's prudence — only of course he did not put it so flippantly. It remained to give the magazine a name, now that it had at last a local habitation; and the christening was neatly accomplished by Holmes.

But the first number was after all delayed. For in the great financial panic of 1857 (the worst the country had seen for just twenty years) the firm almost went under; and the narrow escape justified to the band of eager writers what had seemed the excessive caution of Phillips. The first number appeared at last in October, calling itself November. The death of Phillips two years after and the break up of the firm severed the connection of its founder, Underwood, with the magazine. The editorship had been given to Lowell, at a salary of two thousand five hundred dollars with six dollars a page for his own contributions. This and the regular rate for other contributions was on a scale more liberal than had ever been heard of before.

When Scudder became editor of the *Atlantic* in 1890, Lowell wrote him, "There are now twenty people who can write English where there was one then." But there were a great many more than could find a steady market; and it is no wonder that writers whose only dependence for a livelihood rested upon magazines were always clamouring to found them. "It is safe to say," reflects Scudder, "that few prominent writers in America, Longfellow and Cooper being the chief exceptions, failed to dream of launching a magazine; and the initiative in almost all the cases of important magazines has been taken by the author rather than the publisher." The hungry New England authors appropriated the new one with avidity. "I am glad if you like the *Atlantic*," Emerson wrote Furness in January, 1858. "We hope when it shall be better. One would think it would be easy to find good

criticism, but the department is hard to fill. Then what I call the Zoroastrian element, which I think essential to a good American journal, Lord Bacon would 'note as deficient!' And I believe further that we have not yet had a single correspondent from Philadelphia. I hope we shall yet supply all these deficiencies."

The Atlantic Club (though it never actually existed as such) gathered the contributors together under the auspices of the publishers during the first months of strong interest; and Phillips had presumably other red-letter evenings or rather afternoons in his life, now drawing to a close. But gradually some of the contributors felt their feast of pure culture impaired by the presence of mundane persons like publishers, and more exclusive dinners were given. Colonel Higginson speaks of one amusingly in *Cheerful Yesterdays*. "The most notable of the monthly dinners was held at the Revere House on the occasion of Mrs. Stowe's projected departure for Europe. It was the only one to which ladies were invited, and the invitation was accepted with a good deal of hesitation by Mrs. Stowe, and with a distinct guarantee that no wine should be furnished. Other feminine contributors were invited, but for various reasons none appeared except Mrs. Stowe and Harriet Prescott. The dinner was a very awkward one until wine, surreptitiously ordered, enlivened things a bit. Dr. and Mrs. Stowe told Whittier afterward that while the company was very distinguished the conversation was not what they had been led to expect." This may be readily appreciated when it is known that Lowell discoursed to Mrs. Stowe on the superiority of *Tom Jones* to all other novels, while Holmes demonstrated to Dr. Stowe that profane swearing really originated in the pulpit. Poor Mrs. Stowe! To sit at a table where wine and *Tom Jones* were alike discussed! After such faithlessness and such tactlessness, no wonder it took the *Atlantic* thirty years to summon up its courage to invite women again!

A few weeks after the death of Phillips in 1859, the

firm suspended payment. Its enormous stock of books and sheets and plates was sold at auction in the autumn, and Trowbridge says that he was shifted, scrip and scrippage, to a New York house. Fortunately the *Atlantic* fell into good hands, he goes on, those of Ticknor and Fields; it is interesting to note that it was a project of the elder and, one would have supposed, more conservative member, while it was opposed by the junior, whose literary tastes and associations with authors would have seemed likely to render him the more earnest of the two in its favour. The price, ten thousand dollars, looked formidably large for those days, and Mr. Fields deemed it too hazardous an undertaking. If he had been on the ground he might have thought differently; but he was abroad. At all events, the senior's courage and sound judgment were abundantly vindicated. So far, Trowbridge; and Scudder, too, says that after many plans for the future of the magazine and much competition of the publishers, Ticknor and Fields bought it. But although Scudder made one in the procession of *Atlantic* editors, still the following story — narrated many years afterward in the magazine itself — seems too circumstantial to be inaccurate:

Governor Rice was the assignee of the original publishers of the *Atlantic*, and he sent letters to a dozen different publishers telling them that he should sell it to the highest bidder, whose offer should be received by noon on a certain day. The day arrived, and not one bid had come. Mr. Rice walked over to the office of Ticknor and Fields and said to Mr. Ticknor, "I have not yet received your bid for the *Atlantic*." "No," replied the publisher, "and you will not, for we don't care to undertake the responsibility of the venture." In point of fact, the risk was not great, for the circulation stood at that time at thirty thousand copies. Mr. Rice pointed to the clock on the Old South, and it was after half-past eleven. "I am about to go to my office to open the bids," said he, "and I am sure Ticknor and Fields will be sorry if I find none there from them." Ticknor was apparently immovable, Fields was in Europe. Mr. Rice continued his appeal, and the hands of the Old South clock their way. At five minutes to twelve Ticknor turned to his desk, wrote a line, sealed it, and handed it to the Governor. Mr.

Rice carried it to his office and solemnly proceeded to open it. It was the only bid, and the sum mentioned was twelve thousand dollars. Mr. Rice went at once to Mr. Ticknor and said, "The *Atlantic* is yours." Mr. Ticknor was startled and replied, "Pray let no one know what I bid, for all my friends would think me crazy!"

"I may say," wrote Lowell to Norton, "that I think it is just the best arrangement possible. Whether T. will want me or not is another question. I suppose he will think that Fields will make a good editor, besides saving the salary [which was now three thousand dollars]; and F. may think so too. In certain respects he would, as the dining editor for example, to look after authors when they come to Boston and the like. I shall be quite satisfied, anyhow — though the salary is a convenience." Later, he wrote Emerson: "I saw Ticknor yesterday, and he says he wants the magazine to go on as it has gone. I never talked so long with him before, and the impression he gave was that of a man very shrewd in business after it is once in train, but very inert at judgment. I rather think Fields is captain when at home."

When Fields returned, he took the helm. Times were so threatening that the firm seems to have concluded that the salary was, as Lowell had anticipated, an item. "On the business side of editorship, at least," says Higginson, "it was a great relief when Fields was in the chair, and the junior publisher really proved a much better editor in other ways. For one thing, being publisher, he had a free hand in paying for articles; and he raised prices steadily. He first introduced the practice of paying on acceptance, though he always said that it defeated his object. Instead of quieting the impatience of contributors for publication, it increased it. He had a virtue which I have never known in any other editor or publisher, that of volunteering to advance money on prospective articles yet to be written. I have also known him to increase the amount paid, on finding that an author particularly needed the money, especially if it were the

case of a woman. He was capable of being influenced by argument, and was really the only editor I have ever encountered I could move for an instant by any cajoling; editors being as a rule a race made of adamant, as they should be."

"In 1860 our literary centre was in Boston," wrote Howells in *Literary Friends*, "wherever it is or is not at present. The claim of the commercial metropolis to literary primacy had passed with the perishing of inanity of *Putnam's* magazine, for *Knickerbocker's* was decrepit and dotting, and *Harper's* was not yet distinctly literary. Philadelphia was now counting for nothing, its publications having become really incredible in their insipidity. In Boston, every ambitious young writer was eager to enter his name with the chosen among the contributors of the *Atlantic Monthly*, and in the list of Ticknor and Fields, who were literary publishers in a sense such as the business world has known nowhere else before or since. Their imprint was a warrant of quality to the reader and of immortality to the author." With the establishment of her magazine, Boston stood at last in the eyes of New York and Philadelphia as she had long stood — not without reason — in her own. She was supreme.

Aldrich was one of the ambitious young writers Howells speaks about. He might have been content with his success in New York, for at the ripe age of twenty he was sub-editor under Willis of the *Home Journal*, and was at the same time literary adviser for the publishing house of Derby and Jackson. On first entering Fields's offices in the Corner Bookstore, he says in *Ponkapog Papers*, he saw the editor's memorandum book open on the table and observed certain items within. (Doubtless he was careful to keep his own memorandum book closed when he became editor!) "Don't forget to mail R. W. E. his contract — Don't forget O. W. H.'s proofs —" Whereupon the cheeky youngster added an item of his own, "Don't forget to accept T. B. A.'s poem," and fled. The poem was accepted, paid for, *and* never printed, says

Aldrich; and adds, "It was a real kindness." One wonders if, when he came to occupy the editorial chair, he was as kind to the author of another poem with the manifest destiny of which another intruder interfered. When he took the editorship upon Mr. Howells's resignation in 1881, says Professor Perry, he had the comforts — both before and since his time considered too Capuan for an *Atlantic* editor in office hours — of a pipe and a red setter. Once the setter ate a sonnet. "How should *he* know it was doggerel?" exclaimed Aldrich admiringly. But there was no joke intended when about this time he gaily wrote to Bayard Taylor of his Ponkapog farm, careless of coming slang and quoting the laughter-loving Gail Hamilton, "I am twenty miles from my lemon — the *Atlantic Monthly*."

Mr. Howells thus tells of his first entrance into the sanctum of the *Atlantic*.

My business relations at that time were with another house, but all my literary affiliations were with Ticknor and Fields; and it was the Old Corner Bookstore that drew my heart as soon as I had replenished my pocket in Cornhill. It very quickly happened that when I was shown into Mr. Fields's little room at the back of the store, he had just got the magazine sheets of a poem of mine from the Cambridge printers. [The poem, by the way, had been printed with an unfortunate error; and though it meant the wasting of a sheet in the entire edition, Fields recalled it.] He introduced me to Mr. Ticknor, who asked me whether I had been paid for it. I confessed that I had not. And then he got out a chamois-leather bag and took from it five half-eagles in gold and laid them on the green top of the desk in much the shape and of much the size of the Great Bear. I have never since felt myself paid so lavishly for any literary work, though I had more for a single piece than the twenty-five dollars that dazzled me in this constellation. The publisher seemed aware of the poetic nature of the transaction. "I always think it pleasant to have it in gold," he said.

The success of the *Atlantic* made the firm amorous of other magazine adventures, and flirtations ensued which, in the end, brought about the departure of their first love to another household. An important one of these was a

few years' dalliance with that venerable spinster, the *North American*.

Lowell wrote to Fields in 1864, "It's a great compliment you pay me, that whenever I have fairly begun to edit a journal, you should buy it." Lowell and Norton had for a while been attempting to revive the magazine, which, though it had regained its literary distinction under Dr. Peabody, had still remained aloof not only from the world but from prosperity. The new editors were bringing it nearer to the former but not to the latter when Osgood decided to lend to the task the machinery of a large publishing house. "Under Lowell and Norton," says Scudder, "its scholarship though equally distinctive was more exact, and its breadth of view much enlarged; it was a striking example of how a magazine may at once be lifted to a higher level without being compelled to turn a somersault. Norton took the labouring oar in editing, and Lowell yielded, as with the *Atlantic*, to the temptation to shirk the drudgery of editing." Neither the editors nor the publishers perceived, however, the salient fact — that the day of the quarterly was done. Mr. Howells wrote of the Lowell-Norton administration before the Osgood period: "The *Review* could have suffered nothing at their hands except that mysterious injury which comes of being made too good; but it is certain that it did not prosper, and I remember one of its publishers saying Here was the horse and carriage which he could have kept if he had not chosen to keep a *Review*." In spite of Osgood, it still remained an expensive vehicle. "Though he was a generous spirit," says Mr. Howells, "he was not inclined to more than the sacrifice of a horse and carriage on the shrine of the *Review*." He sold it, and rock-ribbed as she was, the sale shook New England. For the new owner of the maiden haled her from the study to the mart and from Boston to Beelzebub!

"The war was nearing its close," says Trowbridge, "when Fields invited my co-operation in establishing a new 'illustrated magazine for boys and girls.'" It was



called *Our Young Folks*, and was a financial success from the start. Trowbridge, Gail Hamilton, and Lucy Larcom were the editors. "I became manager in 1870. The firm at that time, under its new name of Fields, Osgood and Company, occupied a spacious store and chambers at 124 Tremont Street. The house had a lunch-room with a generously served table, at which publishers and the various editors met, and such contributors and book-authors as happened to be about were often welcomed." Aldrich had, in 1865, become editor of the third periodical of the house, *Every Saturday*, and Mr. Howells was now assistant to Fields on the *Atlantic*. "As I recall those pleasant rooms," wrote a contributor to the *Atlantic*, "it seems as though they were always full of sunshine. There could not be greyness or dulness with Mr. Fields, Mr. Aldrich, and Mr. Osgood in possession, and the constant visitor, who, the chances were, would be wise or witty or both. I think clouds and rain began to come when Mr. Fields retired. From the pleasant quarters in Tremont Street the house moved to Winthrop Square, and never again till it reached Park Street did it know the comforts of home, so to speak — it had only business offices."

Thus was Mr. Howells installed as assistant to Fields.

The whole affair was conducted by Fields with his unfailing tact and kindness, but it could not be kept from me that the qualification I had as practical printer for the work was most valued and that as a proof-reader I was expected to make it avail on the side of economy. Our proof-reading was something almost fearfully scrupulous and perfect. It would not do to say how many of the first American writers owed their correctness in print to the zeal of our proof-reading, but I may say that there were very few who did not owe something. As for the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, her syntax was such a snare to her that it sometimes needed the combined skill of all the proof-readers and the assistant editor to extricate her. I look back now with respectful amazement at my proficiency in the detecting the errors of the great as well as the little.

Mrs. Stowe herself used to say that she left her verbs

and nominatives to be brought together by her publisher; and it must be owned that it never ruffled her in the least. She would be the last one of all the immortals to regret it, if Mr. Howells had ventured into details.

When he went to Boston to assist in editing the *Atlantic*, all its contributors were New Englanders and dwelt in the region roundabout — “except for those New England men and women living in the splendid exile of New York.” Thus it may be seen that Mr. Howells was already — or thinks he was — casting a wishful eye back to the metropolis; and when he returned whence he had come he was to utter that famous gibe which still makes Boston snort. But if from the inner shrine of the *Atlantic* editorial room came treachery, from the same room a little later came atonement. It was in 1865 that Aldrich took up his permanent Boston residence as editor of *Every Saturday*. Within a short time Aldrich was writing Bayard Taylor, “I miss my few dear friends in New York — but that is all. There is a finer intellectual atmosphere here than in our city. The people of Boston are full-blooded *readers*, appreciative, trained. The humblest man of letters here has a position which he doesn’t have in New York. To be known as an able writer is to have the choicest society opened to you. A knight of the quill here is supposed necessarily to be a gentleman. In New York — he’s a Bohemian! Outside of his personal friends he has no standing.” This last Mr. Howells had said also, but still his roué heart perversely sang “Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.” And the coarser siren kept on beckoning him until he took the cotton from his ears. Not so Aldrich. “Though I am not Boston, I am Boston-plated,” he began to say. Later we find him writing to Stedman, echoing (or was it anticipating?) almost the very essence and structure of his predecessor’s cavil. “In the six years I have been here I have found seven or eight hearts so full of noble things that there is no room in them for such trifles as envy and conceit and insincerity. I didn’t

find more than two or three such hearts in New York, and I lived there fifteen years. It was an excellent school for me — *to get out of!* I wonder that I got out of it with my English tolerably correct." But the final amends were yet to come. Mr. George Cary Eggleston in his *Recollections of a Varied Life* says that he made Aldrich the offer for Bryant of the literary editorship of the New York *Evening Post*. This position the old gentleman considered the very highest literary crown America had to offer. Aldrich wrote back that he knew it was in every way to be coveted, and added, "But what, my dear Eggleston, can the paper offer to compensate one for having to live in New York?" And thus, finally, was Boston avenged!

But to return to Mr. Howells's account of his unsplendid expatriation in the colder light of the Northern frontier! "The editors had been eager to discover any outlying literature," he says, "but very little good writing was done beyond the borders of New England. The literary theories we accepted were Boston theories, the criticism we valued was Boston criticism. New England has now ceased to be a nation in itself, but that was something like a national literature and Ticknor and Fields embodied New England literature. James R. Osgood, who became afterward the head of the house, forecast in his bold enterprise the change from a New England to an American literary situation."

But just about this time Stedman in New York was writing Taylor: "The Boston house, naturally, drive apace every steed that wins a heat. But when a man's pace is slow, though sure, they don't make much of him unless he is 'in their midst.' (That phrase is bad English.) They never ask me for anything, and have declined what little I have sent them. I have this week hit upon a magnificent subject, but when done, I shall not have the courage to send it to the *Atlantic*. Besides, I don't want it to appear in the late spring, and I *do* want the money for it; and *Scribner's*, *Harper's* or the *Galaxy*

will use it at once and pay me double what Boston would." So there were two sides to this matter. The letter also shows that J. T. F. had not yet begun, in all cases at least, to pay on acceptance — but possibly that was only his little trick to discourage New Yorkers!

New Yorkers were, at any rate, beginning to feel that they were not being treated with reciprocity. They had been complaining for years of the Yankeeisation of their own periodicals, and now the chief literary magazine of the country was taking on the aspect of a closed shop. "Nearly the whole *Atlantic* force are permanent or summer residents," said a Newport newspaper proudly in 1866. Yet the elect of the whole country was supporting the magazine, grumbled New York, or it wouldn't have been able to get along. "It was so strange to dip down in these little Western towns and find an audience all ready and always readers of the *Atlantic*, so glad to see me," wrote Higginson on his lecture-tour. "I have just realised what a clientèle the magazine has." The *Atlantic* had become a national institution, it is true, but its pillars were all Bostonians. And New Yorkers began gleefully to prognosticate the usual results of inbreeding. But the magazine went serenely on its mission of localising America; it even Bostoned Bret Harte! Its intention was to plant a Bunker Hill monument in every remote hamlet. It became the fashion to smile at the Bostonesqueness of the *Atlantic*. The city smiled itself, but with fond maternal joy. Twenty years afterward, about 1892, Mr. John Adams Thayer summed up the whole matter. He had an idea (nobody asked him to have it!) of poking up the *Atlantic*: he tried it and came back to New York feeling as Mrs. Partington must have felt when she tried to sweep it out with a broom. "A great publishing house was behind it, with a list of books of famous old-time authors as well as newer favourites. As a business proposition for the book end, the idea was sound if, as I planned, the magazine could be increased from its small circulation of less than twenty-five thou-

sand copies up into the hundred thousands. [Mr. Thayer had learned to talk thus big in the office of the *Ladies' Home Journal* in sleepy Philadelphia.] To do this the *Atlantic* would have to be *materially changed and illustrated*. [The italics are the affrighted scribe's.] The delightful gentleman who has been for so many years the head of the old house was interested, but to change the magazine in any way — never! It was Boston."

In the long meanwhile, however, some other things had not gone on unchanged. "In 1874," says Trowbridge, "the proverbial thunderbolt out of a clear sky struck the publishing house. The sky was not so clear as it had seemed to many of us who were enjoying the fancied security of that hospitable roof. Mr. Fields retired from the firm in 1871 and Mr. J. R. Osgood (who, like Mr. Fields, had risen from the ranks in business) became head of the house. He was able, honourable, large-hearted but aggressive and self-confident; and under his leadership the concern assumed enterprises involving hazards which the other's more conservative judgment could hardly have sanctioned. Of these, I remember most about *Every Saturday*, which began and ran some time as a modest reprint of selections from foreign periodicals; but which the new firm changed to a large illustrated sheet, designed to rival *Harper's Weekly* in popular favour."

"Long before this reaches you," Aldrich wrote to Bayard Taylor, "you will have heard of the miserable changes that have taken place in the Corner Bookstore. Scribner and Company have bought and swallowed our *Young Folks*, and the *Atlantic* and *Every Saturday* belong to Houghton. [This was Hurd and Houghton, which later united with J. R. Osgood and Company.] Howells has gone with the *Atlantic* permanently, I fancy; and I am to edit *Every Saturday* for one year, and then I am on the town. After being so closely connected with Osgood for nearly nine years, you may imagine that I feel as if I had been cut adrift."

Thus was New York avenged and Boston might have

called to her as Cassius to the spirit of Cæsar, "Even by the sword that killed thee." For Stedman says that Osgood told him that if he had followed his suggestion and established an *Atlantic Weekly* in New York instead of trying to outdo *Harper's Weekly* by making a pictorial of *Every Saturday* it would have saved him one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars. To Bayard Taylor, Stedman wrote as follows:

You have noticed the remarkable changes in the ownership of the *Atlantic* and *Every Saturday*. Probably I was the only writer not surprised by them. You know it has long been one of my theories that the sceptre would come back from Boston to New York after a time, just as it did from Edinburgh to London. The metropolis, many-sided, all-embracing, is the true centre; and the provincial genius of the elder Boston writers has raised up no successors. Two years ago I saw the time was close at hand, cut loose (mostly) from the *Atlantic*, and have thrown all my advice, influence, work, in favour of the "coming monthly," *Scribner's*. This entirely apart for my abiding friendship for my publisher Osgood. The *Atlantic* has steadily declined, despite the most friendly and extended *Tribune* aid, for several years past in authority and circulation. The contrary process has obtained in New York. Literary society here, also, is becoming knit together, rich, catholic — a veritable power.

Yet of the *Atlantic* it may still be said, as was once thundered of Massachusetts, "There she stands!"

The record of Longfellow's connection with the *Atlantic* is meagre. On April 29, 1857, he writes: "Lowell was here last evening to interest me in a new magazine. I told him I would write for it if I wrote for any magazine." A week later he notes that he attended the famous dinner of which Phillips speaks, "to talk about the new magazine he wishes to establish. It will no doubt be done; though I am not so eager about it as the rest." In 1859 he wrote: "The *Atlantic* flourishes. Holmes is in full blast at his Breakfast-Table. Dined with the Atlantic Club. The *Atlantic* is not the *Saturday*, though many members belong to both. They are the writers for the *Atlantic Monthly* — Dined with the At-

lantic Club at the Revere. Mrs. Stowe was there with a green wreath on her head, which I thought very becoming. Also Miss Prescott, who wrote the story *In a Cellar*. One of the publishers of the magazine is a good teller of funny stories." In 1866: "Here is our good Fields frightened at the length of the Dante letters. I confess it is a quality of food not adapted to the great mass of magazine readers. But I trust the *Atlantic* has some judicious readers who like to have some timber in the building and not all clapboards." In 1871 he wrote to Fields: "I come back to my old wish and intention of leaving the magazine when you do."

No American author has ever been more a part of a magazine than Holmes was a part of the *Atlantic*. Mr. Howells said that Holmes "made the magazine;" it may be added that, in a certain way, the magazine made him. Underwood wrote years afterward in the old *Scribner's* that the literary success of the magazine was due to Holmes more than to any other man; the Autocrat, said he, was the only entirely new creation in its pages, and readers always turned to it first; excepting the *Noctes Ambrosianæ* of John Wilson, no series of papers on either side of the ocean secured such attention during the entire century. After the Autocrat came the Professor and the Poet and the novels. With two or three unimportant exceptions, Holmes never afterward wrote for another magazine. In 1870 he wrote Fields, "You have now plenty of young blood for the *Atlantic*, and it is a question with me whether others cannot do better for you than I can. My preference, I do not hesitate to say, is for the *Atlantic*;" in 1890 he wrote Mr. Houghton that he did not wish to listen to any outside temptations, "even when they come in so attractive a form as that of the *Forum*." But not only did the *Atlantic* publish most of his work, it had given him his second wind. He had really abandoned writing when Lowell said he would accept the editorship, though it ought to go to Holmes, only on condition that O. W. H. be the first contributor

engaged. Without the magazine we should have had no Breakfast Table. "I, who felt myself outside of the charmed circle drawn around the scholars and poets of Cambridge and Concord, wondered somewhat when Mr. Lowell insisted upon my becoming a contributor. I looked at the old Portfolio and said to myself, 'Too late! too late!' But Lowell woke me from a kind of literary lethargy in which I was half slumbering, to call me to active service." In 1879 at the breakfast given him by the *Atlantic*, he said that Lowell was the cause of his writing the Autocrat and that any pleasure his writings had given could be added to Lowell's own noble contributions to our literature. But the Breakfast Table series gave much besides pleasure. Even now one may catch in remote rural communities the ground-swell of the storm they made in conventionally devout minds. Much water has flowed under bridges since the Breakfast Table fluttered the orthodox by the impious food it was serving up and the Guardian Angel cost the *Atlantic* a wholesale loss of subscribers on account of its atheism. Holmes wrote to Motley in 1861: "But oh! such a belabouring as I have had from the so-called 'evangelical' press, for the last two or three years almost without intermission! There must be a great deal of weakness and rottenness, when such extreme bitterness is called out by such a good-natured person as I can claim to be in print."

Earlier in the same letter he says: "The magazine which you helped to give a start to has prospered, since its transfer to Ticknor and Fields. I suppose they may make something directly by it, and, as an advertising medium, it is a source of great indirect benefit to them. No doubt you will like to hear in a few words about its small affairs. I suppose I have made more money and reputation out of it than anybody else, on the whole. I have written more than anybody else, at any rate. Miss Prescott's stories have made her quite a name. Wentworth Higginson's articles have also



been very popular. Lowell's critical articles and political ones are always full of point, but he has been too busy as editor to write a great deal. As for the reputations that were *toutes faites*, I don't know that they have gained or lost a great deal by what their owners have done for the *Atlantic*." In 1879 the magazine gave him a birthday breakfast, on December 3d, "as of August 29th," writes he quaintly; "and every one of any account came or regretted." In a letter to Mr. Howells complimenting him upon his management of this affair, Holmes said: "You have brought us an outside element which Boston needed and have assimilated all that Boston could do for you (if you can be said to have needed anything) so completely that it seems as if you had cheated some native Esau out of his birthright." And finally, in 1885 — the whirligig of time just reversing the earlier situation — he wrote thus to Lowell: "Calling on Mr. Houghton this morning on business of my own, he expressed the strongest wish that you could be induced to write for the *Atlantic*. I told him that I supposed you had received or would receive liberal offers from the New York periodicals. He does not want to bid against other publishers; but, to use his own language, it would not be money that would stand in the way of your writing for the *Atlantic*. How much he or others would pay you I do not know. ["I have just had an offer," Lowell wrote to Gilder in 1890, "of a thousand dollars for a short paper of reminiscences!" In 1876 he had written to Robert Carter that a newspaper had asked him for his Fourth of July Ode, apparently as a gift. "I can't afford to give it away. The *Atlantic* — to which I have promised what I may write — will pay me \$300 for it." From this it will be seen that Lowell's market-rate, on his return from the Court of St. James, had suffered a sea-change.] But I do know that Mr. Houghton has treated me very liberally, that he is an exact man of business, that he takes a pride in the *Atlantic*, which I suppose in a literary point of

view is recognised as the first of the monthlies, and that he is very anxious to see you again in the pages of the old magazine you launched so long ago."

But if O. W. H. had by his contributions whistled up a storm of protest from his more orthodox readers, Mrs. Stowe in 1869 lashed the whole English-speaking world into a veritable simoon. To the mind of the younger generation the *Atlantic* may carry no such tempestuous associations — there are, possibly, those who look upon it as a harnessed and fireside force, in comparison with later magazines more avowedly volcanic. Maybe it has simmered down since then or we have simmered up. But, at the time, no one ever caused more world-wide ripples than Mrs. Stowe when she threw a stone into the sedate *Atlantic* (when it wasn't looking). Here are some of the documents in the case.

Mrs. Stowe to Holmes: Lady Byron told me, with almost the solemnity of a death-bed confession, the history which I have embodied in an article to appear in the *Atlantic Monthly*. I have been induced to prepare it by the run which the Guiccioli book is having, which is from first to last an unsparing attack on Lady Byron's memory by Lord Byron's mistress. When you have read my article I want, not your advice as to whether the main facts shall be told, for on this point I am so resolved that I frankly say advice would do me no good. But you might help me with your delicacy and insight; to make the *manner of telling* more perfect, and I want to do it as wisely and well as such story can be told.—Holmes to Mrs. Stowe: In the midst of all the wild and irrelevant talk about the article, I felt as if there was little to say until the first fury of the storm had blown over. . . . That Lady Byron believed and told you the story will not be questioned by any but fools and malignants. . . . It is to be expected that public opinion will be more or less divided as to the expediency of this revelation.—Holmes to Motley: The first thing I naturally recur to is the Byron article. In your letter of August 4th you say there will be a row about it. Hasn't there been! Great as I expected the excitement to be, it far exceeded anything I had anticipated. The prevailing feeling was that of disbelief of the facts. The general opinion was strongly adverse to the action of Mrs. Stowe. The poor woman, who, of course, meant to do what she thought an act of supreme justice, has been abused as a hyena, a ghoul,

and by every name and in every form, by the baser sort of papers. The tone of the leading ones has been generally severe, but not brutal. I might have felt very badly about it, if I had had any responsibility in counselling Mrs. S. to publish, but she had made up her mind finally and had her article in type before I heard or knew anything of it.

Holmes says that Mr. Fields was absent in Europe, and his sub-editor, fearing to lose Mrs. Stowe as a contributor altogether, assented to her request to print the Byron paper. This looks as if the subject of Mrs. Stowe's future contributions had come up in the interview when the propriety of the article was questioned. That Mrs. Stowe was prepared to go any length may be gathered from the facts that Lady Byron's story contained no evidence whatever — it was only an inference, and was unsupported except by Lady Byron's word; and that she ventured, without further confirmation, to rest the case upon a story she had heard thirteen years before; and had held in abeyance until the publication of the Guiccioli Memoirs and an article on them in *Blackwood's* had stung her to action. "At first I thought the world's people had lost their senses," Mrs. Stowe wrote raptly, of the storm her article made; but she went serenely on the tenor of her way. "She always spoke and behaved," wrote Mrs. Fields in loving indulgence, "as if she recognised herself to be an instrument breathed upon by the Divine Spirit." And this unquestionably simplifies conduct.

Considering that Mrs. Stowe's influence more than that of any other person had inaugurated the *Atlantic* and that its second editor and publisher was so great a champion of the cause of woman, the attitude of the magazine toward its female contributors in the matter of dinners was rather remarkable. The *Atlantic* was always feeding itself, but its ladies were not even allowed in at dessert. Lowell, it is remembered, once declined a poem of Mrs. Howe's with the assertion that no woman could write a poem. He said, however, he would gladly accept a prose

article; and this would have seemed lamentable to Hawthorne, to whom "all ink-stained women were detestable." The latter had written to Ticknor in 1854 from abroad:

America is now wholly given over to a d——d mob of scribbling women, and I should have no chance of success while the public taste is occupied with their trash. But I have since been reading Ruth Hall and I must say I enjoyed it a good deal. The woman writes as if the Devil were in her; and that is the only condition under which a woman ever writes anything worth reading. Generally women write like emasculated men, and are only to be distinguished from male authors by greater feebleness and folly; but when they throw off the restraints of decency and come before the public stark naked, as it were, then their books are sure to possess character and value. Can you tell me anything about this Fanny Fern? If you meet her, I wish you would let her know how much I admire her.

But times had greatly changed during Hawthorne's day, and were to change still more. Boston, which had been horrified when Mrs. Howe first attended a woman's rights convention, had now so long cradled the *Woman's Journal* that outlying cynics muttered darkly at the wholesale conversion of her blue-stockings into bloomers. But though the feminist movement had now manifestly begun, the double standard of morality as to public dinners still existed; and equal suffrage for women at the table was thought to mean the banishment of those twin vices, wine and tobacco. When the magazine was sixteen years old and passed to its present publishers, a very large dinner was given,—but no ladies were invited. The next great *Atlantic* dinner was on the occasion of Whittier's seventieth birthday, in 1877; but no ladies were bidden to be present at "the most notable company ever gathered together in this country within four walls." The dinner for this lifelong woman's suffragist was for men only. But there was a slight indication that the embargo was to be lifted — for a few ladies were indulgently admitted after the meal was over, to help applaud the speeches. This proved to be the entering wedge. For it happened that some ultimate outpost and last relay of civilisation,

Michigan or farther, published on the subject a gay article at which Boston smiled but her heart was sad. Mrs. Stowe, Harriet Prescott Spofford, Gail Hamilton, Helen Hunt, Rebecca Harding Davis — brilliant pens that had contributed to make the *Atlantic* what it was — all figured in the scandalous work of *lèse majesté* as bitterly protesting against their exclusion. An admonition from Lochinvar has ever been intolerable to Boston — and Mr. Houghton saw the error of his inherited way. At his next feast there was no sex-line drawn. He had learned the lesson which Boston herself first began to teach awakening America, that a sex-line is a danger line. One-third of the one hundred guests at the Holmes breakfast were ladies; and Mr. Houghton made a sheepish apology. He said that he had always wanted them but had been too bashful to ask them before. And his next feast was in honour of a lady! But this lady, Mrs. Stowe, had to wait until her seventieth birthday for the *Atlantic* to make the *amende honourable* for its masculine misbehaviour at its first dinner to which ladies were invited.

## CHAPTER VIII

### SOUTH AND WEST — ATHENSES THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN

THE activity of the little towns in publishing magazines at the beginning of the nineteenth century was only paralleled toward its close by the countless imitations of the *Chap Book*. And for the same reason. Their proprietors wanted to express themselves and had no other way to do it. In this respect the early crop of editors was not as mistaken as the later, it is true, but the recorders of their aspirations were as brief. Few things are more surprising in the history of our magazines than the number of inconspicuous villages which attempted even ambitious ones. So it had been in New England, and in the Middle States; so it was in the Southern States; and so it was to be in the West. No one guessed, in a new and rapidly growing district, which way the cat was going to jump. Any village courthouse might some morning find itself an Acropolis; and the printer a place side by side with Franklin and Thomas among the achieving pioneers! The States were full of such visionary villages, and of printers who willingly if not gladly went down into their own pockets for the cost of publication.

The first magazine in Maryland, in 1798, was such an acorn from which an oak was to have grown. In the course of two months, said the proprietor in closing, we will resume in the form of a monthly if five hundred subscribers can be procured. But where could so many be found in Frederick Town? The editor of *The Hive*, published in the village of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, might have informed the editor of *The Key* that their towns were too near together for each to become an Athens, and that Lancaster was clearly marked for the favoured

one. The *Child of Pallas*, Devoted mostly to Belles-Lettres, published in Baltimore in 1800, guessed better than either of them as to the future greatness of its dwelling-place, but the growth proved commercial rather than spiritual (as an Athenian might say). Sparks, in his article on Baltimore in the *North American*, 1825, which practically introduced the city to the North, said that the enterprising spirit of its people was much more energetic in its combined and continued action than that of any other city of the United States. But though the centre of Roman Catholic wealth and culture (so much so that the *Metropolitan*, a Catholic monthly, styles her in 1830 the Rome of America), Beatrice Ironside thought she cared more for her pocket than her mind and her soul. The editor of *The Companion* (a mere man!) had given up his hopeless struggle for five hundred subscribers, but Beatrice, who had been his assistant, announced that she would continue the journal herself under the name of *The Observer*. (Note how the gentle intimacy of the former title gives way to the emotionless alertness of the latter—can this be a forecast of feminism?) Beatrice the energetic thus taps Baltimore over its acquireline nose with her lively pen:

Oh, that mine enemy were editor of a Baltimore Miscellany, and were he anything less than *iron*, how quickly would all my wrongs be avenged. The attempt of a female to promote the cause of taste, literature, and morals would, it should seem, have been cherished with respect and forwarded with assistance and encouragement. But alas! luckless Dame, not long were the illusions of thy fancy to deceive thee. Do the sheets of the *Observer* contain only dissertations on morality and selections from the best authors, however judicious, every one exclaims how dull, how insupportable; on the other hand, does Beatrice endeavour to enliven the page by using the arm of ridicule to combat folly, a thousand divinities suppose themselves pointed at. Every illustration of character that Beatrice has used has, by the folly of some and the black malignity of others, been appropriated to persons far from her imagination. If Beatrice refuses to embellish the *Observer* with the sublimities of the sons of the dullest of dull prose who forcibly scramble up Par-

nassus, they become her sworn and inveterate enemies. Thus is poor Beatrice assailed in every quarter; every weapon is raised against her, except wit; and of that, Heaven be praised, she has no very heavy cause of complaint. Oh, that mine enemy were editor to a miscellany in the liberal, the enlightened, the polished city of Baltimore!!!

Yet, in spite of this delightful Beatrice, Baltimore was for the first quarter of the century the only literary centre, such as it was, south of Philadelphia. During that period it published at least twelve magazines; and it had a literary club, The Delphian, which issued a periodical, the *Red Book*, and numbered among its members Neal, Sparks, John Pierpont, Francis Scott Key, and William Wirt; and, lastly, it made the Athenian attempt which distinguished, at one time or another, all the Northern triplicate of cities—that of capturing every household by an attractive union of politics and fashion-plates. Thus it had decided claims to recognition. Its chief enduring claim, however, was of so pedestrian a nature that it has generally been overlooked. Yet *Niles' Weekly Register* was an extraordinary achievement. It was published from 1811 to 1849! Once, in the prime of its long life, it migrated to Washington for three years; and it retired to Philadelphia for a nice quiet place to die in (and during its final year there it was only half alive, since its animation was suspended for three months of that period!). “Containing political, historical, geographical, scientific, statistical, economical, and biographical documents, essays, and facts, together with notices of the arts and manufactures and a record of the events of the times”—you would scarcely suppose that its editor would have found the spare moments for a series of humorous essays entitled *Quill Driving* (although you may guess the title was not entirely an inspiration) and a book of importance on the *Principles and Acts of the Revolution*. So important did his generation find the *Weekly Register* that a General



Index to the first twelve volumes was published in 1818; and so valuable did a succeeding generation find it as a contribution to American history, that it reprinted the first thirty-two volumes. Well might two American towns be named in honour of the father of so monumental a record! Beatrice Ironside ceased to issue a weekly repertory of original and selected essays in verse and prose ere Niles could record her as one of the events of the times, but the year 1806-07 glitters more brightly for the scribe who places this wreath on her unknown brow than all the period covered so painstakingly by his stupendous register. Did she make much ado about nothing when she smartly berated Benjamin Bickerstaff, for saying that the sun of *The Observer* had set when he left its pages in a huff — he, the oracle of most of the little misses of the town? Opera-bouffe Boadicea amongst those forgotten beaux and belles, and first of editresses, hail! Not many stars in your pamphlet era were dancing like that one under which you were born.

Thirty years after in time, and a whole century in style, another Southern woman followed her example. But Mrs. Anne Royall inaugurated a new kind of paper — the *Town Topics* of its year — when she established a weekly devoted to gossip of the sayings and doings of men and women of her day. It was not inappropriately named *The Huntress*, and Washington afforded her an abundance of prey. So relentlessly did she stalk it that John Quincy Adams called her “the virago-errant in enchanted armour,” the latter part of the phrase referring doubtless to the immunity which chivalry was fancied to dictate. No fire-eater fought any duels with Mrs. Royall, it is true; but, on the other hand, while her censure was no more vindictive and personal than was most men’s of the time, her praise had a saccharinity which would have stumped even the most grandiloquent masculine pen.

When you went farther South than Baltimore and

Washington, you jumped all at once into another civilisation. It was that of a landed aristocracy, says Professor Baskerville.

The settlers lived far apart, and the many rivers allowed them even to dispense to a great extent with roads. To the private schools at rich gentlemen's houses the poor seldom had access, and a free school system did not exist. So the newspaper, the next great educating power, found uncongenial soil in the Southern Colonies. Literature was thought to be undertaken only by those who had been a failure in law, politics, or the Church. All over the South, even in the smaller towns, were coteries of men and women who lived in an atmosphere of wit and learning; but the eighteenth century reigned supreme, and artificially vitiated everything.

In 1834, an article in the Charleston *Southern Review* sought to account for Southern literary sterility by the imperfect education of the people. In Colonial times Charleston had been a world by itself, and even now it seemed immeasurably remote. "An awful retribution hangs over the Boston book-sellers," wrote Samuel Gilman to Sparks in 1824, "for their vile neglect of sending periodical publications to Charleston. We never get them till more than a month after their publication." Another Charlestonian wrote him: "I will readily undertake to procure for you the works which may appear in this State and Georgia. You are aware that our press is a very sterile one. Of periodical publications we have one, the *Southern Christian Register*, an Episcopalian magazine." But considering the scantiness of her reading public, the Charleston press was only comparatively sterile. Indeed, she had been derisively called by less ambitious neighbours the graveyard of magazines. To this jest she could afford to reply calmly that in order to die one must first have been born. At any rate she had brought forth at least ten first-class magazines, and also the one professional man of letters in the South — even if poverty had obliged him, patriotic as he was, to send most of his goods to the North, where they could afford to pay for them. William Gilmore Simms was

connected with over half these attempts. The *Cosmopolitan*, *An Occasional* proved to deserve its epithet, and the *Magnolia or Southern Appalachian* struck no roots; but the *Southern Review*, in 1828, dragged its slow length along for four years. It was perhaps the most perfect example America afforded of that scholarly contempt for popular demand which the English reviews had set native classicists to admiring. The men are not living who have read it throughout, but such as have emerged from its covers come up gasping their surprise that an unsettled and isolated district could have been thought capable of producing in sufficient numbers the savants who would have found such fare palatable. Even the stately *North American* had not ventured to be so exclusively classical or scientific. Nor did the *Southern Review* make, apparently, the slightest attempt to secure general attention. Enough for it that able scholars all over the South were deeply interested in the subscriptions they received in return for their valuable articles! But in spite of their thus highly paid services, Legaré, its editor for two years, had often to furnish half the contents. Consequently, when he went to represent the country at Brussels, the magazine collapsed.

In 1845 *Simm's Southern and Western Monthly* issued twelve numbers, filled for the most part by the proprietor, and was important enough to get itself purchased by the *Literary Messenger* of Richmond. In 1849 he became editor of the *Southern Quarterly Review*, which, established in 1842 in New Orleans, had moved to Charleston. This magazine was founded "to protect the rights of our Southern soil from invasion and to promote the cause of learning, arts and literature among us. But aside from its political creed it would have none other — above all it would express no theological opinion." Nevertheless, though Charleston held as hotly to this creed as New Orleans, the review had run down; and on account of his great local reputation Simms was engaged to revive it at a salary of one thousand a year.

Though Simms was not an apostle of its creed, he was for a time successful in floating it. "In two years," says Professor Trent, "he had made a very respectable publication out of a worthless one, comparing not unfavourably with its Boston contemporary. He got almost none of his salary, but from paying nothing to his contributors he advanced to the almost unheard of extravagance of paying the best of them a dollar a page. It is true that the publishers often dishonoured the drafts drawn on them by eager contributors, but still some payments were made. He himself got part of his salary in the free printing of his books and pamphlets. He used his social acquaintance to enlarge the subscription list." Thus altogether, he was a very valuable editor, especially if he himself wrote for nothing. But as he was writing novels, articles for other magazines, an interminable correspondence, and lecturing from city to city like any modern Chautauquan during the seven years of his editorship, it does not seem as if even his very remarkable energy could have found much time for contributing to its pages. In 1854, the year before he relinquished it, he said it had readers in every State and in the three great European capitals. It lasted only one year after his departure, but its demise was assisted by a fever and a fire.

Long before this, however, a former associate editor had doubled on the tracks of the magazine and founded one of his own in New Orleans. Its literary interest was confessedly secondary to "defending the rights and developing the resources of the West, the South, and the Southwest." The *Commercial Review*, 1846, had learned from the *Quarterly* how few were the Southern readers for an exclusively literary periodical; nevertheless it kept literature always well in sight. After many struggles, De Bow was able to announce in the sixth volume the largest circulation and the strongest influence in the South. But this did not interfere with a temporary suspension or his tortuous progress through no less than six New

Series. His experience found an indignant voice in 1855. "Is it not a notorious fact that every Southern author, editor, or compiler who has had the temerity to try the experiment of appealing to that *dernier resort*, Southern patronage, has been compelled to pay the piper of his patriotism. How generously we continue to patronise Harper and Blackwood, Godey and Graham, and the quarterlies of the North, while the *Southern Quarterly* is in the very act of breathing its last gasp and *De Bow's Monthly* reduced to appeal for its just dues." Still *De Bow's*, more successful than its neighbour, not only maintained the spark of life by continuous gasping, but actually began to find the process salutary. The year before the war saw it flourishing; but the next year much diminished the advertising it had built up, and the scarcity of paper compelled a smaller type. In 1853 the proprietor had been appointed head of the Census Department in Washington, and had for eighteen months edited the periodical from there. He thought he could do the same thing from the Rebel capital when he moved there on service for the new government. But at last the sturdy proprietor was unable to make both ends meet, in a geographical and a pecuniary sense as well, and he yielded to fate. Immediately after the war he bobbed up indomitably with another New Series, but the old war-horse was now making his last charge; and his periodical soon gave up the fight for literature and became entirely commercial.

He, like the other editors of the South, was seeking valorously to do the impossible — to create a sufficient reading public out of an uneducated people. The three magazines described had the largest circle of readers to be reached, they gave a voice to the best writers of the South, and they had great part in moulding the issues that ended in war. There was abundant literary activity, if only there had been some market for it. Even in the decade before the war there were seventeen magazines started, and *Russell's* added another to the long

procession in Charleston alone. The editors, however, could scarcely live on each other's patronage; readers were widely dispersed under the plantation system; and even had the periodicals been readable to others than those stimulated by motives of local patriotism, Northern people were not paying money to hear that the North under the farce of the Union — as even so unimpassioned a periodical as the *Southern Quarterly* said — "threatens to crush us beneath its unholy power."

It was largely because the *Southern Literary Messenger* was less sectional that it became the most successful magazine of the South. But, like the others, it got only starvation diet at home. In the fourth number — as we read in Minor's admirable digest of its files — the editor admits some of the contents are not up to the standard, but his aim is to call forth the undeveloped talents of the Southern people; yet he is compelled to announce that he has received more complimentary notice in the North than in the South outside his own State. The number of contributions and contributors from the North is striking. The second proprietor asserted at once that it was not intended to make the work local, but it should never cease to be Southern; and a home enterprise should have home support. The *Messenger* in its twenty-first year informed its friends that it had now become the oldest living periodical except the *Knickerbocker*, which was its senior by but six months; yet for years past it had met with the most meagre patronage, and unless its means were enlarged must perish. It notes in 1858 that Putnam's spiteful *Monthly* had gone where the woodbine twineth, but the rising *Atlantic* is decidedly anti-Southern. The next year the editor says that the *Messenger* has been much less sectional in its literary works than the Northern magazines and that it has been just and impartial to Northern writers. As Mrs. Sigourney had written for the very first number, so Donald G. Mitchell and Thomas Bailey Aldrich had graced the latest ones.

The accusation of sectionalism, of course, was rife on

both sides. It could not have been otherwise in the later years. But Richmond had begun it early. The *National Magazine*, 1799-1800, had said: "Sixty-six subscribers from Connecticut leads us into the region of wonders. This is the State which sends to Congress seven of the most bullying servile satellites that tremble at the nod of John Adams. It looks as if the people of Connecticut were beginning to think for themselves." Yet "the disgusting New England assumption of all the decency and all the talent" which Poe said was rampant in Griswold's *Poets and Poetry of America* is, at this distance, difficult to perceive. Talent was not abundant in the then antebellum literature of the South, but when it was to be discerned by eyes that had no reason to be unduly inquisitive it did not go unrecognised — as Simms and Poe and Augusta Evans could vouch. Not unrepresentative in its temperate tone was this notice in the *Boston American Magazine of Useful Knowledge*, 1834:

We were surprised to find the last *Southern Literary Messenger* charging Mr. Bancroft with great mistakes in his *History of the United States*. The editor, who appears an able writer, even insinuates that they are designed. It cannot be admitted that Mr. Bancroft deliberately misstated facts, but that the editor is more fully acquainted with the history of Virginia is not improbable. We were sorry to see this disposition and hope it will not be indulged. Errors and mistakes ought, indeed, to be corrected; but even this should be done in a kind rather than in a harsh manner. Sectional or party feelings among literary men in different parts of the Union would be deeply deplored by every patriot, and we think by every high-minded scholar. We have had enough of this sort of warfare with England for fifty years past. We hope that nothing of the sort will arise between the scholars and writers in different sections here.

But if the periodical was more readable because less sectional, and being so had some support, however slight, from the North, the chief reason for its success was that Thomas White, its founder, was a thoroughly practical man both in the printing and the business offices. When he inaugurated it in 1834, he announced himself only

printer and proprietor, and said that he would engage an editor when he could. His editorial work was done by others, at first gratuitously. R. H. Stoddard wrote:

The first number consisted of thirty-two double column octavo pages, and its subscription price was five dollars. I am not prepared to say it was worse than the average of its time, but it was pretty bad. Two months passed before the second appeared, and it could hardly be said to be superior to its predecessor. The third number, which was extended to sixty-four pages, was instructive if not entertaining. By whatever standard it was measured it was a failure. Mr. White had not been sustained by the leading writers of America further than by their good wishes, for not one of them had contributed a line to the luckless periodical.

It bettered its promise, however, and in another year every one in the North had heard of its existence. White lived to manage it nine years. From 1847 to 1860 John R. Thompson conducted it. The next year it began to pull out the Editor's Table in a way long since discovered to be symptomatic, but Augusta Evans kept up interest by her *Beulah*. The editor formally committed the periodical to secession and urged Virginia to follow suit. That it should have continued at all during the war is testimony to the vitality which had enabled it to starve for so long a period. The growing depreciation of money raised the price to five dollars (Thompson had reduced it to three), then to eight, ten, and fifteen. Four double numbers were issued to make up for deficiencies; a monthly record of the war filled many pages, but the magazine was forced to grow more and more eclectic. Finally, in 1865, without notice, it abandoned its magnificent struggle. It had fought a good fight if it had not finished its course. No magazine but the *North American* had yet lived so long as this thirty-year-old veteran, which weathered starvation to fall in actual battle at last. None had struggled with more adverse conditions; none had so well or so lastingly preserved its tradition.

It is said that "Horseshoe Robinson" Kennedy, of Baltimore, called White's attention to Poe. He had been



a most popular contributor to the first volume, and with the second became assistant editor. He got out just twelve numbers. "Before the end of the spring," says Minor, "the *Knickerbocker* and the *Mirror* had refused to exchange with the *Messenger* on account of his critiques. Even home papers began to speak of Poe's 'queerities' and the 'regular cutting and slashing' of his notices; and Poe had well begun his lifelong offensive." In January, 1837, there is a notice that "Mr. Poe's attention having been called in another direction, he will decline with the present number the editorial duties of the *Messenger*, but he will continue to furnish its columns with the effusions of his vigorous and popular pen." One of White's letters to Poe shows that it was his intemperance which severed his connection, but White seems to have been genuinely sorry to part with him and to have conducted the affair with all delicacy. He spoke highly of him in print, and he gave Poe a puff on his becoming editor of *Burton's*. Poe did not contribute until 1844, and the next year it was announced that he would again write critical articles.

With his stories and his criticisms during the meagre two years of his connection with the magazine, Poe was certainly able to reflect that, as at no time in her previous literary history, he had put Richmond on the map. But the letter he wrote to Anthon when projecting the *Stylus* was somewhat flamboyant. "I had joined the *Messenger*, as you know, then in its second year, with seven hundred subscribers; and the general outcry was that because a magazine had never succeeded south of the Potomac, therefore a magazine never could succeed. Yet in spite of this and the wretched taste of the proprietor, which hampered and controlled me at all points, I increased the circulation in fifteen months to five thousand five hundred subscribers, paying an annual profit of ten thousand dollars when I left it." White would have been interested to find out where this enormous sum of money was going. In 1840 he was writing Griswold:

"If you choose to give me your labours for one dollar and fifty cents a page Bourgeois type and two dollars for Minion, go ahead. And even at these rates, my dear friend, you will have to be most patient with me.. Indeed, you will be obliged to suffer me to take my own time to pay this pittance." Had John R. Thompson known of this colossal increase in the subscription list due to the noise Poe was making in the North, perhaps he would not have complained so bitterly in a letter to Griswold that Southern literature could not succeed there. "The *Messenger* is almost gone," he said in 1851. "Four years of hard labour find me in debt, my small patrimony exhausted." Yet the periodical had a greater literary reputation under him than under Poe, even if it did not elicit so much lively comment. Apparently, though without him it would not have bulked so large in contemporary mention, Poe neither made nor broke the *Literary Messenger*.

In 1835 James Freeman Clarke wrote to Emerson from Cincinnati, "I send you the prospectus of a magazine which we are about getting under way, and which we mean to make the leading Western periodical. We intend to combine literature and other matters with religion, and make it generally attractive. We intend that it shall be *Western* in its character, and as free from merely conventional restrictions as may be."

This was the *Western Messenger*, of which he shortly became editor; and it then moved to Louisville so that he could have an eye on his pulpit and his periodical at the same time. In spite of many misgivings that his eye should be single unto the former, he remained editor until his departure for Boston; and then the magazine migrated to its new editor, Channing, back in its first home; and travelled no more until it joined the choir invisible in 1841. Curiously enough, no paper could have been more Bostonian than this which Clarke intended should be Western. For the conventional restrictions he wished to free it from were the same as those condemned by

Emerson when contemplating his "organ of spiritual philosophy." Largely supported by Eastern Unitarians, in it the Transcendental movement which hung fire in Cambridge for five years found its first public voice; and, parent of the *Dial*, it expired soon after it had plucked its best feathers for its offspring. Emerson first appeared in print there; Elizabeth Peabody and Margaret Fuller contributed, and its editors and assistants and eight others of its writers betook themselves to the Eastern messenger as the *Western* showed signs of running down. But it is worthy of remark that those transcendentalists that had sojourned in the West thought that some of the Eastern ecstasies were a little too rarefied for intelligibility. It is also noteworthy that in spite of its constant struggles with practical demands, the *Western Messenger*, though a voice crying in the wilderness, lasted about two years longer than the Eastern evangel. As few of the denizens of the Ohio Valley could have fathomed what the *Messenger* was driving at, it seems likely that most of its readers really *bought* it — which is more than can be said of the other. Both were distinguished by much original and stimulative writing of rare excellence. Distinctive, also, like everything transcendental, was *Dial* number two — which took the name (with unshod feet and hushed breath) some six years after Emerson's had ceased to measure the sunshine. It was grandchild of the *Western Messenger*, and also the extra-mural work of a minister. To it flocked the elder dialists with Emerson and Frothingham, although the editor himself contributed most of the pages. But let Moncure D. Conway tell his own story:

My theological and philosophical heresies reported in the Ohio journals excited discussion far and near, and a magazine became inevitable. In January, 1860, it appeared; the *Dial*, a monthly magazine for literature, philosophy, and religion. It was well received, had a large subscription list — the Jews especially interesting themselves. I was cheered by letters, and one brought me William Dean Howells. He noticed it in the Ohio *State*

*Journal*, and said, "Until now Boston has been the only place in the land where the inalienable right to think what you please has been practised and upheld. If Cincinnati can place herself beside Boston on this serene eminence, she will accomplish a thing nobler than pork, sublimer than Catawba, more magnificent than Pike's Opera House. It numbers among its contributors some of the most distinguished thinkers of New England, and it seeks to bring out all the thinkers of the West." The *Dial* at the end of the first year was really slain by the Civil War several months in advance of its outbreak. We could not continue literary and philosophical discussions, and the war of pens and words between the anti-slavery people and the Unionists who proposed pacification. Should the time arrive when the West is interested in its intellectual and religious history, the *Dial* will be found a fair mirror of the movements of thought in that period of extraordinary generous seeking.

Period, indeed, of extraordinary generous seeking. It was in the journals of the Middle West that the anti-slavery agitation found its widest public utterance. Clarke in the first number of the *Messenger* had quoted twelve pages from W. S. Channing's *Slavery*, and condemned both that system and the principles of the Abolitionists. On the destruction of the printing-press of Lovejoy at Alton, Illinois, and his death at the hands of the mob, he wrote passionately, "Abolitionism, its folly and its mischief, is not now the question. The question is of American freedom, of liberty of thought and speech, of the freedom of the press." That freedom was nowhere so maintained as in the Ohio Valley. For reasons of policy the Eastern periodicals were barred to discussion of slavery. Even "on the serene eminence" of Boston, Lydia Maria Child and Julia Ward Howe were made to feel chill disapproval. The former had been systematically frozen out of the monthly press because of her views. "Life is growing too earnest with me to admit of my writing pretty stories," she wrote to Griswold, "and thus the effect of unpopularity is no inconvenience to me." The *North American* decidedly discouraged articles about slavery; the *Knickerbocker* printed only such views as were shared by gentlemen

everywhere; the editor of *Graham's* wrote Longfellow in 1842 that the word slavery was never allowed to appear in a Philadelphia periodical, and that the publisher objected to have even the name of his new book, *Poems on Slavery*, appear in the pages. Except in periodicals founded by the Abolitionists, and which were read only by Abolitionists, there was little freedom of the press in the popular sense. Such as existed was cradled in the Ohio Valley, perhaps more than elsewhere. The Richmond *Examiner*, the most famous Southern journal, was unique—North or South—for printing views which were not its own or might cost it subscribers. It gave extracts from the anti-slavery writers, especially Theodore Parker. Its freedom, by the way, was more praiseworthy than its logic, for it reconciled slavery with the most radical democracy on the ingenious ground that the blacks were not strictly human beings.

Professor Stowe had written to his wife in 1840: "The little magazine (the *Souvenir*) goes ahead finely. You have it in your power by means of it to form the mind of the West for the coming generation." The task was peculiarly congenial to Mrs. Stowe, of course, but it was an ideal that actuated all the magazines of the West. In 1850 she wrote to him: "I can earn four hundred dollars a year by writing, but I don't want to feel that I must, and when weary with teaching the children and tending the baby and buying provisions and mending the dresses and darning stockings, sit down and write a piece for some paper." She had met Dr. Gamaliel Bailey when he and James Birney started the earliest anti-slavery paper in the West, the Cincinnati *Philanthropist*. Three times there his printing office had been sacked by a mob, but he issued the paper regularly. He was selected to direct a new Abolitionist organ in Washington, and he carried to the *National Era* (1847-1860) the spirit of extraordinary generous seeking he had found in Cincinnati when he moved there from Baltimore. Mrs. Stowe wrote him in 1852 that she was planning a story that

might run through several numbers. He applied for it at once and she began to send off weekly instalments of Uncle Tom's Cabin. The year's work brought her three hundred dollars. Dr. Bailey issued his periodical to subscribers on, apparently, a strictly cash basis. "Every paper is stopped at the beginning of each year where the subscription is not forwarded in advance," ran the announcement. Such barks had been heard before with no bites behind them, but the *National Era* seems to have meant what it said. In 1850 they were happy to announce as an occasional contributor, Nathaniel Hawthorne, lately secured as a writer for *Blackwoods*. "He has favoured us with an article, which we now hold back for a week or two, only for the sake of those of our subscribers who under our terms have been cut off, but will doubtless speedily renew." The article was The Great Stone Face, presumably that for which the author wrote Griswold that Bailey had offered him one hundred dollars. The *National Era* of course, like every other periodical, got most of its contents for nothing, but to even its head liners it could not afford to pay so much later. Dr. Bailey wrote Gail Hamilton in 1856 that for two years he had been compelled to be rigidly economical. "If you can afford to wait, I will on the first week of next December," he said in February, "send you a remittance of fifty dollars, for which you may send me whatever you please in your best style of prose sketches at any time between this and then." When the time came he paid her, but said that his misfortunes still continued and he would be unable to make any offer for the future. The year after his sudden death Mrs. Bailey conducted the periodical, but was forced to discontinue for lack of money—though none of the receipts, she said, had gone even to the support of her family. De Bow in New Orleans had sunk his private means and lived on twenty cents a day to start his magazine. Mrs. Bailey, delicately nurtured, suffered privation to continue her husband's. The one was for slavery, the other against; and both were

passionately desirous of bettering their world. Dr. Bailey was in one respect wiser than his corresponding-editor, Whittier; at least one cannot imagine his Northern associate planning the astute social campaign which Conway tells about:

Dr. and Mrs. Gamaliel Bailey of the *National Era* had established in Washington a brilliant *salon*. At their soirées there were always distinguished guests from abroad, and Grace Greenwood was on these occasions quite equal to any of those French dames whose *salons* have become historic. The Bailey entertainments were of more importance in furthering anti-slavery sentiment in Washington than has been appreciated. The anti-slavery Senators were rarely met there, with the exception of Hale; but their ladies often came. Nothing in Washington was more brilliant. The serious force and learning characteristic of the *National Era* could hardly prepare one to find in Dr. Bailey the elegant and polished gentleman that he was. He was the last man that one might imagine facing the mob that destroyed his printing press in Cincinnati. I do not wonder that the mob gathered for similar violence in Washington had quailed before his benign countenance and calm good-natured address to them. Mrs. Bailey, a tall, graceful, and intellectual woman, possessed all the nerve necessary to pass through these ordeals, while at the same time her apparent rôle was that of introducing young ladies into Washington society and shining as the centre of a refined social circle.

This social quality they had had plenty of opportunity to exhibit in Cincinnati. Conway thought it in 1856, when he went there, the most cultivated of the Western cities. "Thanks to a third of the population being German, music flourished more than in any other city except Boston; there was a grand opera house which annually gave several weeks of opera or operatic concerts. Society was gay and its famous masquerade balls were as brilliant as those of Europe. Whitelaw Reid, Don Piatt, and Murat Halstead were writers on its distinguished daily press." By that time, too, it had made good its early-uttered claim to the title of Athens of the West in a longer list of short periodicals than any other city but its three Athenian predecessors. It had begun with the *Literary Cadet*, which had merged into the *Western*

*Spy*, but both of these young hopefuls died early. They both struck a bugle note, however, which could scarcely have been duplicated in any of the Atlantic magazines of the time; and for the equal of that clear blast of mingled youthfulness and sophistication one would have to go back to the mushroom efforts of the Colonial and Revolutionary periods. It proved to be the Western tone. Crude as it was at its worst, it never lost that clarion ring which is the property of all new movements conscious of their destiny to supersede the old.

Mr. W. H. Venable has made a specialised survey of the periodicals of the Ohio Valley. The first adventure entirely literary in Cincinnati was the *Literary Gazette*, 1824. "This is the age of magazines, even sceptics must confess it; where is the town of much renown that has not one to bless it?" wrote one of the contributors to the opening number. The editor lamented, however, that his readers must part with the year and the *Gazette* together; thus was furnished one more instance of the futility of all hopes founded on the anticipated encouragement of those intellectual exertions which contribute to soften and adorn life among a people whose highest ambition would seem to be exhausted in acquiring the means of support. The editor, like Clarke and Conway and others of a later harvest, drew on his personal acquaintance East, for we find in the magazine three poems of his boyhood's friend, Fitz Greene Halleck. In 1827 Flint's *Western Monthly Review* was more successful, and lasted for three years. "We are a scribbling and a forth-putting people," said the Editor's Address. "Little as they have dreamed the fact in the Atlantic country, we have our thousand orators and poets." Like the other three Athenses, Cincinnati tried to catch with honey those households whose men remained impervious to the attractions of solidier fare. The motto of the *Western Lady's Book*, 1840, was so rash in its blandishments that the periodical could not survive the first number—"The Stability of Our Republic and the Virtue



of Her Institutions is with the Ladies." Another of the same name followed ten years later, and almost rounded out a decade. In the beginning, under the name of the *Western*, its masculinity was not more diluted than usual; but caught like all American editors by the golden lure of *Godey's*, the proprietor announced that because of the liberal patronage of the ladies it would become more exclusively a lady's book by introducing fashion-plates and music. The introduction of the latter was ever the stamp of the ultra refinement of the fair sex. Perhaps it was in this case meant to mollify the weaker of the weaker sex by a possession all their own, since they shared the fashion-plates with their stronger sisters. They might easily have taken umbrage at the attention given the latter — for "by special arrangement with the proprietor," Mrs. E. A. Aldrich, having suspended her woman's rights paper, the *Genius of Liberty*, wrote eight or ten pages a month advocating her savage views. In the "Fashions" the lion and the lamb could lie down together, but certainly no one who demanded the ballot-box would be expected to dally with the pianoforte. This policy of all things to all women was worthy of a longer shift. By far the most extensive and expensive literary journal was the *Ladies' Repository and Gatherings of the West*, says Mr. Venable. (Whither have such titles fled and on what frontier will ever again exist the psychology that brought them forth in pain and heaviness?) "Started nine years before the first number of *Harper's*, it was almost the only Western magazine that was well-backed and supported. It was managed by the Methodist Book Concern but was conducted in a liberal spirit from 1841 to 1876. Designed to furnish reading particularly acceptable to women and the family circle and at first abounding with heavy advice to females, it immeasurably and unceasingly belectured and relegated misses, maids, and matrons to their sphere." Nevertheless, it fostered female writing and it often paid in cash — both of them quite surprising in the Methodist

Book Concern. The *Parlour Magazine*, which would doubtless have called itself a Lady's Book had not the title been filled at the moment, was also conducted on rather austere lines at first. The editor had no intention of debauching any parlours by admitting sentimental romances. Alice Cary came back from New York to infuse the slightest touch of worldliness in it, but she soon returned. The *Parlour Magazine* dragged along woodenly for two years, its new romances being as edifying as its old articles against them, and finally married in 1855 the *West American Monthly*, of which union it died at once. Two other Cincinnati periodicals come in for brief mention. Both of them scorned the obvious feminine bid, it is true, but their chief claim to be mentioned here is that they so well typify the Westernness that gave them birth. In 1847 Coates Kinney, the author of that famous lyric, *The Rain on the Roof*, was assistant editor of *The Genius of the West*. The other editor had trouble with the proprietor and set up a rival journal, *The New Western, the Original Genius of the West*. It soon went out, however, and the other *Genius* burned alone for five volumes. Then, second characteristic of these Western periodicals, all of its good contributors went to the seaboard and left it without any oil in its lamp. These were the Cary girls, Wallace, Whitelaw Reid, and Howells — eastward the course of the Inspired took its way.

The chief furtherer of the cause of periodical literature in the West was W. D. Gallagher. He did not, it is true, start so many magazines as did L. A. Hine, who set four of them going in six years, but he staved off his creditors longer in each case. Hine had plenty of ideals but never enough cash to last the year out. Gallagher was responsible for but three, and all cut a dash except the first — the *Western Minerva*, started in 1824. He was sixteen years old when this *Minerva* sprang forth mature from his head, and he was writing verses for the *Literary Gazette* signed, not Jove, but "Julia." When he began the Cincinnati *Mirror* in 1832, he was guaranteed a salary. But

it never paid its way in spite of its extensive circulation (what a pity some of those honest Jews of Swine-sin-naughty — as a famous parody dubbed it — didn't rally to his support as they did to Conway's!); and the guarantee amounted to what it usually did in such cases. The paper lasted, however, four years. "Many of the *Mirror's* articles have received a circulation unsurpassed by any other contemporaneous literary journal," said he in valedictory, "and yet we have been forced to abdicate the tripod. Simply because of the delinquency of those who have subscribed. There are due to us several thousands of dollars. It now remains for our subscribers to say whether we shall sacrifice only our time and labour or whether we shall suffer a pecuniary loss too." The subscribers cheerfully acquiesced in the latter alternative. After its death he received calls to edit, one after the other, two magazines beginning with the inevitable "Western." Three years later he began the *Hesperian*. He said in his opening speech that his ten years' exertions in behalf of Western literature had been fruitless to himself of everything but experience, yet he finds courage to make one more attempt, because he is convinced that there is throughout the whole West a great demand and a growing necessity for it. The *Hesperian* was important and had some important contributors. But Gallagher, who had been willing to starve when he had nothing, was now tempted to eat when he could, and betook himself to a mere newspaper at a liberal salary for the rest of his days. The paper, like all newspapers, had a somewhat pretentious literary department, but not large enough to endanger his salary. This defection from the cause of pure literature should be forgiven in Gallagher. The *Hesperian's* publisher exhibited the grossest remissness and most culpable mismanagement, he says; and it is to be remembered in his favour that he was so patriotic that he even refused the requests of Eastern publishers when they came at last. It is amusing to note that when the *Southern Literary Messenger* reviewed his

first book of poems in 1838 it regretted the volume had not been published in one of the Atlantic cities. "How natural it is to condemn a book unread that has the imprint of a country town." This from that arrogant Athenian hamlet of the South to a city which was not only the Athens of the West but a pork-metropolis as well!

Yet for many years Lexington, Kentucky, had run her a close race as Athens. The seat of the Transylvania University, during the War of 1812, she had the right long before that to be called a literary centre. As early as 1803 she had maintained for one whole year the *Medley or Monthly Miscellany*. In 1819 she ran for two years the *Western Review*, which chided the morals of Don Juan and chortled with delight over Ivanhoe quite in the same way as its Eastern brothers, if a good four months later. The most important part of its contents, says Mr. Venable, was a series of authentic narratives of conflicts with the Indians. "Gentlemen who are not in the habit of writing for the public, and who are not even accustomed to composition of any sort, are still solicited to communicate, in the plainest manner, the facts within their knowledge," the far-sighted editor had stated in the opening number. This and its predecessor were the first literary magazines west of the Alleghanies, but when Lexington's third came along in 1829 there were competitors. The *Literary Messenger* and Clarke made Louisville known to the North just as the *Southern Messenger* and Poe had made Richmond known; and George D. Prentice was almost the first in that brilliant procession of personal editors which made the West famous and of which Colonel Watterson, in the same city, is now the last survivor.

Other towns which threatened to set up as Athens but were nipped in the bud were Knoxville and Rogersville in Tennessee and New Richmond and Lebanon in Ohio, with one magazine each. Mount Pleasant and Oxford, Ohio, had two; and so had Vandalia, Illinois.

The activity of the entire region is shown by the fact that out of three hundred and fifty-nine newspapers published in 1813, Kentucky had seventeen, Ohio had fourteen, and Tennessee had six. Of these magazines only the Vandalia ones can be noticed. The *Illinois Magazine*, conducted by Judge Hall, said that paper shipped from Pittsburgh in November did not arrive until April. Mr. W. B. Cairns quotes from the Department of Literary Intelligence in one of the numbers: "We have not a great deal to say under this head, because new books are not remarkably abundant in Vandalia. Nor do we expect to be able at any time to throw much light upon the passing events of the literary world. But we intend to pick up all we can." The *Western Monthly*, conducted by the same editor, boasted *thirty-seven* contributors, all but three from its own side of the mountains. Among its "highly gifted females" was Harriet Beecher. Her first literary work won the prize of fifty dollars which this enterprising editor offered in 1833. Gallagher's Cincinnati *Mirror and Ladies' Parterre* said of it, "A New England sketch by Miss Beecher of this city is written with great sprightliness, humour, and pathos." Before 1860 at least ninety magazines devoted wholly or in part to general literature had appeared in the region watered by the Ohio and its tributaries.

As for Chicago, she had had a baker's dozen. Her first newspaper had been set up when the mail was carried on horseback once a week to her five hundred head of population — fit beginning for a city that by the end of the century had achieved at least two hundred and fifty-eight periodicals, about eighty of which were of magazine rank. And almost before she outgrew her first picket-fence she was indulging in weekly literature, the *Gem of the Prairie* — fit forecast of her literary spirit. For this proved even more aggressively Western than the spirit of Charleston had proved Southern; and "prairie" or "Western" or "Chicago" dominated the title of almost every one of its successors. Mr. H. S.

Fleming in *Magazines of a Market Metropolis* has reviewed her career in detail. The sea-board periodicals began to come West about the middle of the century, and it was perhaps sufficient to drive even a more modest town into aggressiveness to behold their utter obliviousness to any country not East of the Alleghenies. Like their Charleston brethren, Chicago editors burned to report their cause aright to the exclusive East; and like all the pioneers, both new and old, they strove earnestly to create a literature and disdained the aid of mere commercialism and even of common-sense. The Civil War in splitting the country into North and South, somewhat obliterated the frontier between East and West; and after the war Chicago began a long struggle for metropolitanism in literature. But in spite of the newer vision of her editors, the wonder-story of her commercial prosperity intensified her local spirit. The strident note of it, however, appeared more in their tone than in her patronage. The *Lakeside Monthly* (1869), Mr. Fleming tells us, chided Western writers for looking with unbecoming awe upon Eastern reputations, yet was uneasily anxious to demonstrate that the "Western" in the magazine it had just absorbed would not portend any restriction in aim and scope. The distinctively literary character of this magazine approximated the *Atlantic* — whose title it had doubtless intended to suggest. It at least succeeded in making Eastern editors for the first time turn some attention to Western subjects and seek Western writers. Also, it demonstrated its kinship with the foremost Eastern periodicals by getting itself annexed to a publishing house. It lived through the fire, and long enough to receive a proposal of consolidation from *Scribner's-Century*. But like Cassius, it preferred death to creeping between the legs of a colossus, and found an honourable grave in 1874.

Though literary attention it had received from the arrogant East, the first Chicago magazine to gain popular subscription, either at home or outside, was the *Little*

*Corporal*, a children's magazine which got such extraordinary foothold that it even disquieted that elderly Boston millionaire, the *Youths' Companion* (still pursuing its career, just as though *Harper's Young People* and the *Argosy* had not successively announced that it was impossible to create a new audience every four years!). Apparently, the reason for the success of the *Little Corporal* and that of the Chicago *Ledger*, a family story paper modelled after Bonner's, was that each forgot to be Western. Like the Southern, the Western magazines entirely over-estimated local patriotism. The first Chicago author to acquire national reputation did so by his laughter at Chicago's mixture of idealism and crudity; the wreath on the cover of Eugene Field's *Culture's Garland* was a wreath of sausages, and the sub-title of the book was "Being Memoranda of the Gradual Rise of Literature, Music, and Society in Chicago and Other Western Ganglia." At the beginning of the last decade in the century, Chicago started *America*, a weekly which paid enormous prices for national reputations; yet its circulation during its brief career remained chiefly Western. Not until the city step-mothered the *Chap Book*, did she establish a periodical, says Mr. Fleming, which gave the manager of the Western News Company any reason to change his dictum "Put a New York date line on it or the West will not take it." When the *Chap Book* ended its unique and international career (during which it had been so lofty about the entire American literary output that all the leading publishers refused to advertise in it) it transferred its good will to the *Dial*, which since 1880 had reviewed books and literary matters in a dignified and conservative way.

*America* had paid Bret Harte five hundred dollars for his dialect poem, *Jim*. San Francisco achieved the national fame of a literary centre for which Chicago had vainly yearned. This had come about by no means because it was less aggressively Western but rather because it happened to possess, along with the men, more distinc-

tive and picturesque features, and its local colour was not the familiar crimson of the slaughter house but had the aureate glint of which the world knows all too little. San Francisco had not so persistently striven for literary distinction as had Chicago, and her one golden hour of it caught and left her almost unaware. She had begun, however, with the same æsthetic intentions. "San Francisco is only five years old," said *Putnam's* in April, 1854, "yet it supports two or three theatres, an opera, a monthly magazine, an Academy of Science, thirteen daily papers, and we don't know how many weekly papers." The magazine was the *Pioneer or California Monthly*, established that month — too soon to say it was "supported," as the sequel proved. But the *Californian* lived long enough to be heard around the world, for it published Mark Twain's first hit, *The Jumping Frog*. In 1860, Bret Harte became editor of the newly founded *Overland Monthly*, and though it has lived ever since, its voice never reached so far again as it did in its second number. In this, despite the protest of the maiden proof-reader, *The Luck of Roaring Camp* was published. Harte refused to edit the magazine or write for it again unless the proprietor yielded. A like fate had already met the hit of a succeeding number, *The Heathen Chinee*, which had been rejected by the *San Francisco News-Letter* as twaddle. The history of both of these record-breakers shows that it pays the author to have a personal pull with the editor. But it did not pay the *Overland Monthly* to make its editor so famous. For Bret Harte succumbed to Eastern publishers and departed carrying its fame with him; and the *Overland* got what consolation it could from the fact that the *Atlantic* paid him ten thousand dollars for his literary output for one year and in it he wrote almost nothing at all. The hen that had hatched ducklings saw them all depart to the distant water — which is, alas! the fate of all frontier hens. Promising writers forsake the Athens that may be for the Athens that are,



## CHAPTER IX

### PUTNAM'S AND THE NEW JOURNALS OF OPINION

THE ideal of a magazine which Lowell had attempted to embody in his *Pioneer* (the life of which was so brief that it might almost have been called the Minute-Man) found another incarnation in New York before returning, in the *Atlantic*, to its original dwelling-place. Still may be heard echoes of that joyful choir which hailed the establishment of *Putnam's*. This was in 1853—the year of the earliest forecasting ripple of the *Atlantic*, by the way. It took the Boston literati four years to persuade their publishers to make the venture, but either Putnam was rasher or the New York writers more eloquent—for the magazine was only six months incubating. And the month that saw it absorbed into *Emerson's* beheld its delayed twin just making an appearance. The race is not always to the swift!

All good periodicals go when they die, said Holmes, into the archives of the deaf, dumb, and blind recording angel whose name is Oblivion. But magazines which have lived ten times as long as *Putnam's* have been taken less frequently from their dusty shelves. "Many of the writers of the *Dial* are now connected with that successful and independent magazine, *Putnam's Monthly*," wrote Mr. Frank Sanborn in the *Harvard Magazine*, 1855. "It is an approximation to the end for which the *Dial* was set up. When shall we have in New England a magazine which to the enterprise and briskness of *Putnam's* shall add the high purpose and rare genius of the *Dial*?" He seems not to have known that "the gnomon that should mark the full noon" (as Alcott pompously prophesied) was even then in the second year of its ges-

tation. To that magazine long years afterwards, Holmes wrote in retrospect. "The *Atlantic* was still an experiment. *Putnam's*, owing its success largely to that very accomplished and delightful writer, Mr. George William Curtis, had so well deserved to live that its death was a surprise and a source of regret. Could another monthly take its place and keep it when that, with all its attractions and excellencies, had died out, and left a blank in our periodical literature which it would be very hard to fill as well as that had filled it?"

But all unaware has the present writer, as if with the pen of destiny, killed off the meteoric *Putnam's* ere it has fairly begun. He must return to its inception. This was due to "Harry Franco" Briggs. Like Underwood, he represented to the publisher that the time was ripe for a literary monthly of the highest sort, which should stand for American literature and should at the same time concern itself with public affairs; but, very different from Underwood, he could not point to an established literary circle on which he could rely. Instead — when Putnam had willingly listened to the voice of the tempter — a round-robin was sent out to American authors asking if they would give their support, and calling attention to the announcement that the magazine would be entirely original. Most of the replies were joyful, and commented significantly on the fact that as far as originality went there would be little domestic rivalry. The publisher said that he would pay for everything he used at the highest rate he could afford; and this he would raise as time went on. He hinted at his expectation that some of the magazine material would be available for books. Sauce for the goose, this had no doubt been sauce for the gander also; and there was also another inducement to the book-publisher to undertake the enterprise. The success of *Harper's* had shown that such a magazine could be utilised as the most effective advertising machinery to make known a publisher's list.

"Has not the long and dreary history of magazines

opened our eyes?" questioned *Putnam's* of echo in opening. "Is there some siren seduction in theatres and periodicals that forever woos managers and publishers to a certain destruction? Why do we propose another twelve-month voyage, in pea-green covers, toward obscurity and the chaos of failures?" The answer to these questions was the same as it had been one hundred years before. "Because we believe the time is now ripe," and so forth. But, aside from this perennial ripeness of the time, there were two new bids for survival on the part of the young aspirant. The first was its quixotic determination to be original and to accept no man's goods without payment; the second was its intention to move nearer to life by the discussion of every-day affairs. For the former, the time proved, on account of certain local and foreign conditions, to be greener than it had ever been before. The latter attempt was less premature, yet it brought no fruitage of enduring subscribers to *Putnam's*. Indeed, for most of them it was an ideal which suffered the fate of the medlar — to become rotten before ripening. Few free-born American citizens had ever been willing to have their opinion criticised, and to pay for the pleasure was quite preposterous. It took them some years to learn to refrain from the inalienable right of cancelling their subscriptions at once. Of the welfare of these two confiding ideals, C. F. Briggs, when he opened the Second Series of *Putnam's*, had some interesting things to say:

It is just fourteen years since we had the honour to assist in getting out the first number of *Putnam's Monthly*. We derive considerable satisfaction in remembering the cosy little dinner in a certain cosy house in Sixteenth Street, at which the plan of the work was discussed and the adventure determined upon. The little party consisted of Mrs. Caroline M. Kirkland, Mr. George Sumner, Mr. Parke Godwin, Mr. George W. Curtis, Mr. and Mrs. Putnam, and the present writer. Two of that little party are already gone; the rest remain to assist in the revival. The chief doubt in the minds of many was whether the country could furnish the requisite number of writers to

sustain an original magazine of the better class, but the experiment proved there was plenty of latent talent which only required an opportunity for its development. Through certain misadventures the work stopped for a while, but anxious inquiries have constantly been heard as to when it would reappear. No one seemed willing to believe it had stopped for good. When the old *Putnam* furled its sails for a season, the *Atlantic Monthly* was launched and took the flood of public favour. In its build and trim was much that was most familiar to us. From the numbers of the first monthly seventeen books were printed, including *Potiphar Papers* and *Prue and I*. Fourteen years ago it was considered an act of hari-kari for a popular periodical to express a political opinion, particularly if it was adverse to the "peculiar institution" of the South. But we ventured upon it without any particular harm coming of it, and we shall probably try it again. Certainly, we have no desire to publish a magazine for readers who are too feeble to endure a candid discussion, now and then, of political subjects. One serial used to be considered sufficient for an English magazine; no magazine ventures now to have less than two. American readers are accustomed almost entirely to foreign works of fiction, but we shall publish none but stories of native production.

At the end of the first volume, the editors stated that they had received from voluntary contributors four hundred and eighty-nine articles, the greater part from writers wholly unknown before. From them they had selected some of the most valuable papers they had published. Every article had been paid for at a rate which their writers thought "liberal," all were original, and with one exception all, they believed, had been written for the magazine. For volume two they had as many as nine hundred and eighty articles to choose from, and they had had the good fortune to introduce some young writers of promise. This number was doubled for the fourth volume, and there could be no longer any doubt that abundant native literary support could be found for an American magazine. But literary support was by no means the only thing to be considered. The publishers stated that they were fully aware that in a country where the choicest works of foreign genius are to be had for the taking, to found and sustain a magazine at once uni-

versal in its sympathies and national in its tone, was not an easy task. But the position of *Putnam's*, they felt, was now assured.

No reader of this announcement could have failed to recognise the point of this allusion. "*Harper's* had for the two years since it had been started been almost wholly a reprint of English current literature," says Scudder's Lowell, "and even its cover was a copy of *Bentleys*. It had, however, struck a popular taste, and its success made other publishers jealous, while its easy use of foreign matter made the men of letters angry." *Putnam's* had little to say of the "scissors and paste-pot magazines" except as they made its own position precarious. It exhibited commendable restraint even when *Harper's* published three months after its original issue in *Putnam's* an American story which had been copied without credit in *Eliza Cook's Journal*, of London. Certainly the incident afforded a tempting occasion — as did *Littell's Living Age*, when it republished Longfellow's "Two Angels," appropriated in the same way by *Bentley's* — to remind the public how the reprint magazines kept their eyes shut to all that was going on in America. But upon the latter subject — having a mind of their own and speaking it — *Putnam's* prided itself very much; and here it did venture to proclaim disapproval of its rival. As Curtis was writing for *Harper's Monthly* sketches and social notes, and had *The Lounger* in the *Weekly* when he was associate-editor of *Putnam's*, it may be guessed that he was ambidextrous; in this instance, at least, he must have kept from his right hand the knowledge of what was going on in the neighbourhood of his left. In March, 1857, appeared this interesting article about the periodicals of the rival house.

When *Harper's Magazine* was commenced, it was in pursuance of a shrewd perception that the time and the country demanded and would readily support a periodical of higher character than what were termed the "Philadelphia magazines," which were, to speak generally, simply repositories of silly love

stories, rhymes, and fashion-plates, with occasional poems from our best poets, which served as corks to float the rest of the freight to market. *Harper's* was the rod that consumed all these creeping things. It was compiled with such tact from the stores of current literature furnished monthly by the English periodicals; it was so copious, so various, and so entertaining, and took the field with such an air of confident triumph that a much inferior magazine would have succeeded. The very first numbers were so clean and handsome and prompt and bright that the rivals retired and the "Philadelphia magazines" lost their exclusive prominence. The secret of its popular success is that it just keeps pace with the popular mind; consequently it had no opinions, no politics, no strong expression. The same good sense and shrewd perception also saw that the unprecedented success of the *Illustrated London News* showed conclusively that the public liked pictures, and that careful illustrations gave an increased value to every descriptive article. Instead, therefore, of old fashion-plates and Rosalie and Sweet Seventeen and the Belle of the Ball-room there were two or three elaborately written and capably illustrated articles. The American people had always taken the anti-British view of Napoleon—and the most illustrious contribution to *Harper's* has been the literary apotheosis of Napoleon, wherein for scores of successive numbers that eminent saint was delineated in all the details of his humility, piety, and unswerving devotion to the welfare of mankind by the Reverend Mr. Abbott. This combination of piety and military glory coinciding with the prevailing partiality of American readers, confirmed the triumph that was already achieved. *Harper's* reached a fabulous circulation. Probably no periodical in the world was ever so popular or so profitable. It had ably done what it proposed to do. It was a result to be regarded in some degree with national complacency and pride, because it was undoubtedly much superior to the class of periodicals it supplanted.

But there was a remarkable other side to this phenomenon. It sought to be universally acceptable, and its complaisance inevitably destroyed its force; it was known to be largely compiled from foreign literature and consequently it was considered to be no representative of American talent. It was therefore no leader, no friend, no critic, no censor. It was good-humouredly called the Buccaneer's Bag, Abbott's Magazine, the Monthly Corn Plaster, the Universal Shin-Saver, the Monthly Nurse. But everybody bought it and read it and everybody was sure that nothing decided or impolitic, no laugh at anything that everybody did not laugh at, would be concealed anywhere between its fair yellow covers. It risked no popularity by trying to step ahead and to furnish something a little more marrowy.

It was still felt that the intellectual independence and movement of the country had no organ; and from that conviction in due season sprang *Putnam's Monthly*. In a retrospective view of our literature of the last three or four years, it seems to us very evident that the first immediate effect of the success of *Putnam's* was to naturalise *Harper's*. That magazine ceased to be a second table of the English periodicals and became gradually more and more American. But rather in subject than in treatment; its spirit was still timid and hesitating. Every month it made its courtly bow; and with bent head and unimpeachable toilet, whispered smoothly, "No offence, I hope!" The inevitable penalty was that with the greatest circulation in the world, it could not make the smallest literary reputation. It was managed with profuse generosity—probably literary labour of the kind was never better paid than it has been by Harper—but when the author had pocketed his money, he might as well have pocketed his article. Yet elsewhere it might have made a literary mark. *Harper's* still flourishes with unabated vigour. It still bows and avoids. Their new weekly periodical commences with more chances of pecuniary success than any weekly ever undertaken in America. But already the spirit of the paper is manifestly that of the magazine. In the War of the Roses it is sure that a great deal may be said for white, but then it believes there is much to be urged for red. Whenever unanimity of public opinion may be assumed, then *Harper's Weekly* cordially agrees with the public.

Nevertheless, Stedman thought that *Putnam's*, even in the line of "opinions," left much to be desired. He wrote to his step-father in 1857 begging him to come back from Italy and establish a Republican Review, saying that nine out of ten of the reading public were republicans and had no magazine to represent them. "*Putnam's* is Republican, to be sure, in distinction from other journals, but it does not fling out much of a banner and is not sustained in its mental calibre—is alternately sensible and foolish, light and heavy." Lowell, on the other hand, thought Briggs was a trifle too disposed to consult the opinions of the majority. "I doubt if your magazine," he wrote, "will become really popular if you edit it for the mob. Nothing is more certain than that popularity goes downward and not up; and it is what the few like now that the many have got to like by and

by." What called forth this letter was the editorial disposition to pay attention to the comments of the readers upon the contents of the magazine.

"In 1853," writes Mr. George Haven Putnam, "no such heavy outlay was required to place a magazine upon the market as has proved to be necessary in these later periods of magazine competition. My father told me he actually made no cash investment other than the payment to the authors for their contributions for the first two months. The receipts from subscriptions and sales proved to be sufficient, before the time came for the settlement of the bills of the printers and paper makers, to provide the necessary resources for these. The circulation of the magazine during the four years of its existence ranged from twelve to twenty thousand. What was called the normal price for the earlier contributions was \$3 a page. The more important men received \$5, and contributions of a special character were paid as high as \$10. Of poetry not very much was utilised, but such verses as were accepted (mainly for the purpose of filling up any blank half-pages) were paid for at from \$10 to \$25."

Briggs made an able editor, but the success of *Putnam's* owed to the personal charm of Curtis almost as much as the *Atlantic* later owed to Holmes. "He gave," said Scudder, himself a seasoned editor, "that distinction of lightness and flavour which every literary magazine covets but can rarely command." This all the world could see, but its readers did not know that they had him to thank for keeping it, after it passed into other hands, as near to its original high standards as circumstances would permit. Nor did they know that he was furnishing in his own conduct an example of that fine and quixotic endeavour which from the beginning had characterised the magazine. Curtis was a special partner of Dix and Edwards, who bought out Putnam's rights; he took no part in the management and yet had some pecuniary responsibility. When the firm failed in 1857, Curtis sac-



rificed his private fortune to save the creditors from loss and managed by 1873 to recoup them.

But the excellence of his written work and its popularity all recognised. And the proof of this was the frequency with which it was claimed by others. For the plan of printing articles without names landed them in the familiar predicament of having unsuspected authors pop up everywhere. About Potiphar Papers they published quite a correspondence. The gentleman who insisted that a deceased friend had written them must have been somewhat taken aback when he was told that "one of our editors, Mr. Blank, claimed the authorship for himself." The exquisite pen of this editor opened the new series with a gay and tender reminiscence.

One bright day and long ago — it seems to me now that it must have been soon after the War of 1812, but on reflection I discover that it was in 1852 — I was dining with Mr. Harry Franco at Windust's in Park Row. Mr. Franco asked me what I thought of the prospect of a new and wholly American magazine, and immediately proceeded to set forth its possible character and brilliant promises so fully and conclusively that I knew he was prophesying and that before many months a phoenix would appear. Now in the following autumn after the other dinner — for it is a beautiful provision of nature that literary enterprises of great pith and moment should be matured under the benign influences of good eating and drinking — I found myself consulting, in a bare room in a deserted house in Park Place, where nobody could find us out, with Mr. Publisher Putnam, Mr. Harry Franco, editor-in-chief, and Mr. Parke Godwin, associate editor, upon the first number of *Putnam's Monthly*. Our council chamber was a third story front room in a doomed house near to Mr. Putnam's headquarters. It was a dwelling house, and as fashion had at last flown even from Park Place — the spot below Bleeker Street where it lingered longest — the house was patiently waiting to be demolished and make way for a "store." Every day we met and looked over manuscripts. How many there were! And how good! And what piles of poetry! The country seemed to be an enormous nest of nightingales; or perhaps mocking-birds — certainly cat-birds. I can see the philosophic Godwin tenderly opening a trembling sheet traced with that feminine chirography so familiar to the editorial eye, and in a hopeful voice beginning to read. After a very few lines a voice is heard — methinks from Franco's chair:

"Yes, yes; guess that's enough"—Walter di Montreal, thy hour has come, and the familiar chirography flutters into the basket. I suppose that Mr. Franco and Godwin and the poor fellow who was snuffed out by Mr. Brown's brief remark (that he didn't know the person who had written about Mrs. Potiphar of "Brown's society") might fill many pages with their recollections of the pleasant cradle-and-crib days of the young *Putnam*. Those three were the monthly nurses. They saw that infant phenomenon safely through his prodigious childhood, and how rapidly he obtained his growth! There are books in good standing everywhere, which I can never see but with the feeling of the pedagogue toward his pupils. *My boys, sir, my boys!* he remarks with complacency as the famous poets or travellers or novelists pass by. . . . How this latest born into the monthly world springs and sparkles! Ah, Mr. Franco, if it is not our child, let us submit and believe it to be our grandchild. May heaven bless you, young stranger! Forgive an old-fashioned benediction, but may you be a better man than your father!

The father had gone down, like so many good men and true, in the panic days of 1857. At least, in the euphemistic language of magazine announcements, *Putnam's* espoused *Emerson's* in October of that year — and it was never more true that "a young man married is a young man marred." It then came out that Putnam had sold the magazine some time in '55. The *Round Table* in a series of articles on the publishers in 1866 said that the amount paid to Dix and Edwards, who bought it, on Putnam's own offer, was eleven thousand dollars. And it had paid him a liberal profit while he published it. Many readers did not know that Putnam had relinquished it at the end of its fifth volume, and consequently were somewhat mystified at the absorption, especially when they were editorially assured that the magazine had doubled its circulation in the past three months. "*Emerson's* with his honest and manly bearing," ran the announcement, "has grown so rapidly, and on several occasions so outgrown his tailoring, that it has been a little difficult to keep up with his length of limb." But vital statistics in magazines are always roseate, and though it was true that the youngster had changed his name four times re-

cently and was to do so once more, the alliance — which many people thought unholy — was not to prosper. The publishers pledged themselves to devote every dollar of profit for three years to improving the magazine — a rash oath, for it lasted but one. Thus *Putnam's* made, in the eyes of the world at least, a rather inglorious end. Even before it openly became *Emerson's*, it had greatly petered out. But the two and a half years that Putnam had it were illustrious. It not only cut a dash but it made an epoch in our magazine literature. Tentative as its policy may seem now, it was the first popular magazine to take so vigorous a stand upon the living questions of the day. Furthermore, it had announced that it was going to be American and original; and it had kept its word. For this we owe it a great debt of gratitude.

None know better than our own authors what discouraging disadvantages the publisher of an original American magazine must contend against in being obliged to compete with the unpaid British productions, which are reproduced here almost simultaneously with their publication on the other side of the Atlantic. And while this unequal contest between the publisher who filches his matter and the one who pays for it almost prohibits the possibility of profit to the latter, the American author gauges his demand for compensation by the standard of his British brother. But we are touching, perhaps, on private rights by these allusions. The commercial value of any article depends on what it will bring in the open market, and by that test we will be governed in the question of pay.

Thus ran one of the editorials in the first number of the New Series, 1868. "Many excellent friends who have favoured us with their sage advice, have strangely insisted that it will be useless to expect good contributions without good pay. As though a publisher or an editor were likely to have missed this special lesson in his dealings with authors! One veteran author by way of enforcing his views on this subject demanded a retaining fee of five hundred dollars as an earnest of future payments for whatever he might furnish. But there are two sides to this interesting question of pay. In order that a

publisher should pay, he must himself be paid." Authors, indeed, were growing cocky. Mr. George Haven Putnam in his *Life of his father* said that on account of the three new magazines started about the same time — *Scribner's*, *Lippincott's*, and the *Galaxy* — the competition for the most important contributors became more serious than that for subscribers. Authors who in the day of the first *Putnam's Monthly* had been content with from three to five dollars a page now secured from ten to twenty, and for special contributions much larger sums. His account has many items of interest.

Among the literary plans which engaged my father's first attention in again taking up his publishing business (after the war) was one for the re-establishment of *Putnam's Magazine*. The conditions seemed to be in certain ways favourable for the experiment, but it proved that the new wealth was very largely in the hands of people not interested in literature. The book-buying conditions of the South had of necessity been destroyed by the war. A very considerable portion of people in the North who had been buyers of books were no longer able to indulge in such luxuries. These were the people who had fixed incomes; incomes payable in the legal tender of the day were materially curtailed. The *nouveaux riches* who had made money out of shady contracts or from pork speculations could not easily be reached by the publishers of standard literature. This seemed to give an opening for a magazine.

The new *Putnam's* started off as illustriously as the old. The reputation of the former magazine for a time seemed likely to be regained and maintained. E. C. Stedman and R. H. Stoddard did the department Literature At Home; and Bayard Taylor covered Foreign Literature. All did their work in a way that occasioned admiration and added prestige. But times had changed very much since Putnam had started his earlier magazine on no cash whatever. Not only were authors demanding more money, the public were demanding illustrations. These in the first *Putnam's* had been promised as a treat for the second year. They proved, however, to be few in number and mostly architectural; and the following year, il-

illustrations other than architectural were entirely confined to the first instalment of the *Early Days of George Washington*. But what had been a luxury then was a necessity now. The competing magazines were making large outlays for illustration. The First Series had paid, under Putnam's management, \$12,819 to editors and authors and \$3,000 for illustrations; and thus had proved a practicable undertaking with a circulation ranging from twelve to twenty thousand. The Second never exceeded fifteen thousand, and Putnam considered that with the resources at his disposal it would not be wise to continue. The following "card" marked to the valedictory:

A few words may be expected from the Publishers in closing this second series of *Putnam's Magazine*, and in introducing the new periodical which will take its place. This magazine was very generally and very kindly welcomed. We have the right to infer that the new series has, during the last three years, given general satisfaction. It has had a larger circulation than several of its contemporaries at home, and much larger than a dozen of the English magazines whose names have been familiar for many years. Yet it is more and more evident that popular taste calls for something *different*; it may be higher or lower or better or worse. But those who pay their money have a right to the choice. We have aimed to produce a magazine *wholly* ORIGINAL and essentially American. We have avoided all temptations to *reprint* from foreign magazines, or to cater to anything merely sensational. In this we may have been Quixotic; but the aim at least was fair. The best material sent us — out of 3,035 mss. in three years — has been printed in the six volumes now completed. Our contributors have all received their pecuniary compensation. We wish it had been a great deal larger; but we may state our *relative* reward thus:

Dr. To Cash paid contributors.....	\$30,000
Cr. By compliments to publishers.....	? ? ?
By profits on outlay of \$100,000 .....	0 0 0

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By Balance — ?

We now ask those who have expressed a friendly appreciation of the "pea-green" to permit us to introduce its better-looking successor. Retaining an interest in the sale of the new work (our edition bearing the name of *Putnam's* as well as *Scribner's*) we ask our friends and correspondents to continue

their subscriptions to us, in reasonable confidence that they will receive the full equivalent for their money. In addition to the illustrations afforded by the new magazine, there will be an infusion of fresh energy into the editorial management and a large accession of well-known and capable contributors.

The remainder of Mary Clemmer Ames's serial story was sent free to all paid subscribers. The new editor was to decide as soon as possible in regard to using the accepted manuscripts, and those rejected would be returned (chilling disappointment!). In the first number of *Scribner's* was this announcement: "*Hours At Home*, whose unpretending dress and suggestive title had grown familiar to the eyes of many thousands, died — not of disease, not of old age, not of decay — died simply that *Scribner's Monthly* might live. (*Putnam's*, which has embodied in its pages the old Knickerbocker culture and prestige together with the free spirit of American progress, dies a month later, or rather merges the gathered resources of its life in the new magazine. The two have made their way to this change with the conviction that such changes have occurred in the popular demand that a great success is not possible if sought only by the old means and methods." This was very handsome editorial language on the part of Dr. Holland; for when he wrote a retrospect of the magazine eleven years afterward, he said that *Hours At Home* was both worthless and moribund, and as for *Putnam's*, "when Mr. Putnam came to us with an offer for it, we acceded to his conditions, though I have forgotten what they were, and it was soon quietly left behind with the other." Another sun was rising and already yesterday's magazine was old-fashioned.

(For *Putnam's*, in spite of its new and progressive idea of handling public questions, had upon it the large shadow of Irving.) (It even counselled Melville to read his Addison! Not that Melville didn't need advice, heaven knows; but it would be difficult to devise for his staccato temper a more ludicrous misfit than the undulating Addi-

sonian phrase.) (And there was much of the conscious Knickerbocker superiority and deliberate Knickerbocker exclusiveness about it.) Perhaps if *Putnam's* had lived to grow up, we should have seen how one good custom could corrupt the world. As it is, it wears the charming halo of those generous high-souled companions of our youth who were destined to die young — and each year to become more admirable thereby. There were those who deemed *Putnam's* — in spite of the fledgling authors it was so proud of — entrenched in its clique. It is amusing to hear Stedman, who had greatly contributed to maintain a closed shop, bitterly complain of the *Atlantic* in this respect. "Would finish the poem for the *Atlantic*, did I suppose they would take it from me," he wrote to Bayard Taylor in 1865. "Sometimes I must get an introduction there, through a kind word from *you*. What bad poetry they occasionally print. You furnish apparently all their *good*." The year before he had recorded in his diary: "Finished Holyoke Valley. Here now is a poem which I *know* to be artistic and full of feeling — equal to anything which the *Atlantic* has published for months. But I cannot send it there, because they have time and again refused the best productions of New York writers. Last summer they sent back *the best* short poem I ever wrote, The Test, afterwards printed in my book and copied everywhere. So I must send it to the *Round Table*, where the impersonal rule hides the author's name and where it can reach but a limited audience. An American, New York poet sings against the wind."

These quotations date in the arid stretch between the two oases of *Putnam's*. During part of that period the only good literary paper in New York was the *Round Table*, a weekly of distinguished tone and bright, forceful writing. A literary friend wrote to Stedman in 1864: "The *Round Table* *must* not go down. For God's sake, if Boston can support a literary journal, cannot New York? Your wealthy men must be made to feel that the literary honour of the great city is at stake, and if she

totters prop her good legs." The *Round Table* did not starve to death until 1869, but like *Putnam's*, she suffered, in the optimistic phrase of Briggs, an "interruption" for a little over a year. Its editorial outlook was similar to *Putnam's*. That magazine was saying in 1870: "Our own box is crammed, but the most of it is not good or good in such an indifferent way as to be quite as bad as bad. Nor is it for want of talent it is not better. But our writers want independence, individuality. They seem to be afraid of something or somebody and do not trust their personality. Then again, there is such a manifest absence of care, of study, of labour, of painstaking accuracy in what we do." Four years earlier the *Round Table* had made the same plea for more conscientious devotion to thorough work, and some boldness and power.

What are American writers doing to-day? The vigour and originality that promised a new era at the close of the war are lost already in nerveless twaddle. The leading monthly of the country vainly strives for a new and distinctive series of articles, but is compelled to fall back upon a Biglow paper, Hawthorne's private note-books, and a story written on the other side of the water. The leading review seeks purchasers by publishing sensational articles upon bar-room dailies, which its editors freely admit they cannot endorse. Two literary monthlies, promised to appear, dare not make the venture, mainly because it is well-nigh impossible to procure worthy literary matter. The literary field was never so barren. Meanwhile Sylvanus Cobb, Mrs. Southworth, and Mrs. Stephens are having a boundless opportunity. Disgrace to our scholars and authors! A good writer can make a handsome competence in this country.

The charge of slovenly authorship by both of these periodicals was well sustained, doubtless; but there was a reason why *Putnam's* should have found young writers "afraid of something or somebody and afraid to trust their own personality." They were all trying to cram themselves into the Knickerbocker mould which, though judiciously followed, was still *Putnam's* pattern. And the flowing draperies of the Knickerbocker garment resembled the voluminous military cloak of the period — it was a fine thing to pose in if one had a figure for posing.



What the youngsters of the day were afraid of was not filling it out well enough for *Putnam's* standard, and so they padded to suit. This editorial in the *Round Table* was answered very pertinently (however personally) by a correspondent. What new authors have lacked, he said, is editorial sympathy; they have had precious little of it since the days of *Graham's* and *Sartain's*.

In spite of these publications containing the best efforts of the established authors, the way was not barred to an untrained one and real talent had always a welcome. When Sartain gave up his enterprise and Graham withdrew, a great change came about. No longer having the stimulus of editorial encouragement and good pay, some ceased writing altogether. The New England writers went back to write for New England publications. The New York men of letters soon gravitated to sets. A few men of merit formed among themselves a kind of free masonry of authorcraft and seized upon *Putnam's Monthly* as their special property and kept out all but the brotherhood. *Putnam's* failed as it ought to have failed; and likewise the weeklies conducted by these other sets. *You* are almost alone in volunteering editorial encouragement and proper reward to new pens. What chance has an unknown correspondent in *Harper's Monthly, Weekly, Independent, Atlantic*? A few pens only are used and paid for. If he is bold enough to venture on romance, he is informed by Harper's suave editors that both *Monthly* and *Weekly* are more than preoccupied by foreign writers. Where else can he go? To the New York *Ledger*, the New York *Mercury*, the New York *Weekly*, to the Philadelphia weeklies; just where he will *not* go if he have any self-respect left, but just where many *have* to go who are constrained by their wants to find a market. Or if perchance Harper's do accept a brief story from an American pen, the reward is about one-tenth of what is paid the British writer for mere advance sheets. It is, as you know, considered an editorial favour to permit papers of a literary aspirant to go to press, for which he is supposed to be grateful.

This perennial accusation, never entirely true in the very worst of times, seems to have been truer than generally. For we hear the complaint echoed, as just now in Stedman's letter, by the most established of writers. It must, however, be remembered that self-respect, especially that of writers, is of variable elasticity. Sted-

man, though he said at this period that a married man could not live on magazine work if he wrote night and day, refused to write eleven poems for the *Independent* at one hundred dollars each — he had too much self-respect to make a grist-mill of himself! Yet while he was writing to his mother in 1864 that literature was at a stand-still in America — paralysed by the war, though all other arts and trades were thrifty, the *Round Table* was saying: “In these days even the small fry of authors who live from hand to mouth find far less difficulty in keeping up a pleasant intercourse between the two.” Furthermore, tastes differ as widely as consciences. In 1866 Stedman wrote to Lowell: “I need not tell you how much the best readers in New York have been interested in the new series of the *North American Review*. We all feel like the audience of an opera when the gas is suddenly turned up. In New York quite a literary revival has followed the happy close of the war — you know we have the *Nation* and the *Round Table*, such as they are, well written-for and poorly edited. Then we are to have at least two new magazines this spring, of a respectful cast, and perhaps three. I fear that, as usual here, our publishers and writers will so *divide* their energies that we shall have three tolerable affairs instead of one first-rate and standard.” To say nothing of the fact that there were many people in New York calling themselves the best readers whose pulses were quite unstirred by the prospect of a new series of the *North American*, Stedman and Lowell (who might have agreed exactly upon the latter’s beneficent ministries for the Boston magazine) differed decidedly about the *Nation* established by Godkin in 1865. Stedman said the first number was rather heavy, and in 1867 he wrote: “The *Nation* is cheaper than ever. The magazine man in his complacent stupidity has a laborious genius for saying precisely the wrong thing, as regards poetry.” Lowell, on the other hand, wrote thus to Godkin in 1868: “Its discussions of politics have done more good and influenced more opinion

than any other agency, or all others combined, in the country. For my own part, I am not only thankful for the *Nation*, but continually wonder how you are able to make so excellent a paper with your material. I have been an editor and know how hard it is. . . . I shall write from time to time till I think we are square. What Fields pays me, I doubt if anybody else would." Three years later he wrote: "You are the only man I know who carries his head perfectly steady, and I find myself so thoroughly agreeing with the *Nation* always that I am half persuaded I edit it myself."

Thus we again return to the point of union between these divergent doctors — for if Lowell thought the man who agreed with him had a steady head, Stedman in 1868 was proposing to Ticknor and Fields to scatter the energies of New York writers still further by a literary journal of which *he* was to be editor. Having gone vainly so often to the *Atlantic*, he was now trying to get an *Atlantic* to come to him! It was a neat little irony which the whirligig of time had played upon one of the leading exponents of interurban jealousy.

He and Bayard Taylor were enthusiastically interested in the welfare of the *Galaxy*, a monthly established in 1866, edited by friends of his "who are doing their bravest to establish a New York magazine, and ought to be helped and encouraged by New York authors." To this, Taylor sold many poems of a new friend of his from the South, Sidney Lanier, and got better prices for his intercession. Lanier had brought his first considerable poem, *Corn*, to New York himself but had gone home unsuccessful, convinced "of the wooden-headedness of many persons who were leaders there in literary matters." The *Galaxy* lasted a dozen years — a high class magazine which left no particular mark deserving of notice here, but a boon to "self-respecting" authors — and then (cruel fate for any periodical in which Stedman was interested!) died and entered into Nirvana, the *Atlantic*, in 1878.

The *Round Table*, 1866, in commenting on the great increase in periodicals since the close of the war, summed up the situation, "Many of these new periodicals were trashy to the last degree; some were simply rehashes of the English weeklies; a few were honourable attempts to elevate the standard of literary taste. The era of weekly journalism has fairly begun in this country. Of the weeklies started last year three or four appeal to intelligent people, and these still have vitality." It is strange that any literary man in New York should have failed to see that the *Nation* and the *Round Table* marked the beginning of a better era. Each was the exponent — in the words of the latter periodical — of a high-class, high-toned, and well-written weekly, which believed that people were something more than grown-up babies unable to digest anything more solid than Sylvanus Cobb's romances and Fanny Fern's tart paragraphs, but would listen to a serious discussion of serious topics from a purely American point of view and without scissors or paste-pot.

"I used to try hard," wrote Mr. W. C. Brownell in the semi-centennial number of the *Nation*, "to think the *Round Table* a real rival." Nevertheless, both were seeking to do the same thing — to cultivate a spirit of reasonableness, to express trained and cosmopolitan judgments upon American life and literature. The criticism of public men and public movements had always been personal and partisan, in each case provincial and indiscriminating. Both were trying to give the educated man a voice in the periodical press. Before their advent, and that of *Putnam's* and the *Atlantic*, he had no place to go. Either the audience that he could address was already committed to follow a policy through thick and thin — and demanded that he do likewise; or it barred out any expression of opinion as being likely to disturb the fellowship of the gentlemen there assembled. With the decline of the lyceum lecturer just before the war, the old method of shaping popular thought on public matters had disap-

peared. The growing supremacy in politics of purely material interests made it all the more necessary that popular thought should be directed by independent judgments and in an unpartisan vehicle, particularly as the partisan press was largely given over to glib and gushing writers who rarely imparted their own opinions and never inspected them in the light of other people's.

The attitude of independent judgment on the part of a periodical is now frequently encountered, even though its practise far less frequently carries out its promise, but in that day the assertion of such an attitude was cynically revolutionary. As for the admission that national characteristics and international prejudices might distort judgment, the idea was no less than treasonable! To this last accusation the nationality of the editor of the *Nation* supplied many a frenzied period. Even in Boston, it was said at a dinner table where mature minds were gathered together, "An Englishman might be fit for the kingdom of Heaven but not to edit an American periodical"; and British gold was at its favourite occupation of supplying capital to undermine American ideals. This last in spite of the facts that the financial embarrassments of the *Nation* were unfortunately public property and that the paper was constantly experimenting with changes in make-up in the endeavour to keep afloat. It was generally believed that the end was a foregone conclusion. No matter how "uncommon its gift to make serious inquiry attractive" (in the pat phrase of Mr. Howells), an independent periodical, criticising life and literature from only the highest standards of morality and taste and with no other popular appeal than this, could not long survive. That the *Nation* should have started off with as many as five thousand subscribers is remarkable. On this subscription list it sustained itself, in spite of bad business management, without profiting by patronage or puffery. Lowell (that unpatriotic person!) said that in this regard it was the solitary American journal worthy of respect; and Charles Eliot Norton ("without whose aid," said

Godkin, "I could never have been successful") capped the climax by expostulating with America in its seditious columns for being satisfied with half-way men and half-way achievements. Not even in the old lyceum days, when such unpartisan opinions as people heard were expected to wear the fiery garments of oratory, had any one ventured to proclaim the home of the free the paradise of mediocrity! It raised a rumpus. But the traitors who read its inspection of American ways and institutions somehow took its point of view after the first gasp, and then went forth to make similar nuisances of themselves. At high-water mark there were twelve thousand traitors in all, somewhere about its fifteenth year; but each felt himself commissioned to a high calling and remembered that the success of Saint Paul had largely come about from his talking out of season as well as in. "To my generation," wrote William James, "Godkin's was certainly the towering influence in all thought concerning public affairs, and indirectly his influence has certainly been more pervasive than that of any other writer of the generation."

Now, it is necessary — if we would estimate the influence of these three New York periodicals and their Boston neighbour — to emphasise the fact that all this expression of independent judgment in crisp and quiet accents was something quite new. The *Nation* itself provides an amusing illustration of this. Calling attention with unwearied reiteration to the independence of its opinion, it nevertheless had not ventured to put from harbour without a flag. It intended to furnish "earnest and persistent consideration of the labouring class at the South with a view to the removal of all artificial distinction between them and the rest of the population." And if its consideration lacked anything, it was not persistence. Edward Everett Hale somewhere speaks of the old war-horse abolitionists casting anxiously about for another crusade — most of them polygamously embraced woman's suffrage before the breath was well out of the body of

the first spouse. Godkin, later in one of his letters, naïvely indicates the same necessity. "The newspapers all began now to look about for a cause, and in bethinking myself what the United States seemed to need most in this new emergency, I bethought myself of a reform of the civil service." Thus the natural-born free-lance is ever boastful of the freedom which frets him, and ever provoking the inevitable yoke. At least, so it was in the glad days when independent opinion first tried its wings — the day of the foot-loose reformer and the migratory muck-rake was still unborn. *Putnam's*, ere its brief second life was sped, saw popular magazines which once deemed it indiscreet to hold opinions, scramble for some to exploit; and Godkin chided even George William Curtis in his later editorial chair for upholding principles which as a private citizen he did not believe. The era of opinions or nothing was dawning.

As for literature in the *Nation*, it did not lag behind life. It insisted on impartial and informed judgment of books. This was as new in the literary world as the other in the political and social. Mr. Henry Holt says he still remembers his surprise and enlightenment at their sending a book for review to a man who was supposed to have some special knowledge of the subject. Such a thing, he thinks, had never been done before in American journalism, except spasmodically by the *North American* or the *Atlantic*. Furthermore, the publishers had been used to having everything that was not glaringly ignorant or immoral gently treated, if it was not praised. They did not know what to make of the *Nation's* strange ways, and it educated the publishing trade as well as raised the standard of literary criticism. "Then we used to feel if a book was pitched into it was because of personal feeling against the author or the house. The *Nation* was the leader in the policy of without fear and without favour."

Thus, the period of social responsibility had set in for periodicals; and, as was to be hoped and expected, it

replaced the ideal of moral responsibility — under which they had so long led a pallid and mincing existence, when it was their stupid boast that “everything in the slightest way offensive even to the least fastidious would of course be excluded from these pages.” Another race had come, it is true, and the war had fortunately killed off many age-worn notions and substituted for them others nearer to actuality and common sense. But it was *Putnam's* that, along with its quixotic attempt to make a native literature, had paved the way for a magazine which, retaining the urbanity of the Knickerbocker school, should concern itself not only with literature but life.

And by and by came the recognition of active social forces from a source where it was least to be expected — the *North American*. This is getting us a little ahead of our chronology, but you have already seen how disturbing to classification is the longevity of the *North American*. It is no respecter of pigeon-holes, or we might say (in language more applicable to this immediate literature than to her continuous life) she flutters all dove-cotes.

Osgood sold the magazine to Allen Thorndike Rice for four thousand dollars. Mr. Henry Holt said that he had intended to buy it and thought he had an option on it, and Godkin had agreed to edit it in connection with the machinery of the *Nation*. But the *Nation* itself could scarcely have shaken it more to its foundations than did Mr. Rice. He proceeded to make three astounding changes, and in the intervals between the first and second and the second and third, he seems to have paused to recover from the gasps aroused by his impiety and to generate enough courage for another audacity. First, he removed the magazine — just as if it had been any ordinary movable — from Boston to New York. Second, he made it a bi-monthly; third, he made it a monthly. The reason for the second and third changes was that the quarterly could not keep in sufficiently close contact with current questions or deal with them thoroughly before



the special interest in them had departed. Both of these changes New Yorkers modestly owned to be but consequent upon its change of residence — nobody in Boston cared for close contact with current questions. But for Boston herself the latter changes were unimportant — the *Review* might become a weekly and go to Halifax, so long as it had turned its treacherous and massive back upon its native town. It was as if Bunker Hill monument had walked away. On October 30th, 1877, Longfellow wrote: "Osgood has sold or given or conveyed the *North American* into the hands of the Appletons. Henceforth it will be edited, printed, and published in New York. Mr. Clark at the printing office said, 'It is like parting with the New England Blarney Stone.' He might have said in more classic language 'Troy has lost her Palladium.' . . . That ever the old *Review* should have slipped its moorings in Massachusetts Bay and drifted down to the mouth of the Hudson! It must be towed back again, and safely anchored in our harbour."

Mr. Howells in his delightful contribution to the centenary number says:

"The translation of the *North American* from the intellectual Boston to the commercial metropolis, did make Boston rub her eyes a little, but, as I remember, not much. It would have taken far more than that to make her, long confirmed in her superiority, rub her eyes much. Yet we were not insensible to our incalculable loss; the *North American* had been one of our glories, dim at times but lastingly a glory, an honour to our letters and a very strenuous help to such nationality as they had achieved. The removal may not have been the condition of the *Review's* survival; it might have lived on in Boston, devouring successions of horses and carriages and obliging publishers to get about on foot as if they were no better than so many authors. But the *Review* passed from its noble adversity to the honourable prosperity which now crowns its century. Mr. Rice gave it the look of a maga-

zine without and within; and the stately Roman-numeralled articles with the foot-noted book titles on which they stood, retreated before the brisk onset of light papers of more journalistic cast. I am not sure that it ever sank so low as the symposium, but I believe that Mr. Rice had sometimes the courage to admit two embattled champions to the same number, there to fight out their differing opinions. That was a new thing, and it must have made the older readers of the *Review* sit up. The *North American* is now not at all a review of the old pattern. Something is still to be said for the old pattern, but since it is gone perhaps one is apt to over-praise it. If we waited now for a quarterly criticism of new books, the books would have died of old age; younger sellers would be pushing them from their shelves, and it would not be possible to buy or even borrow the authors reviewed. . . . In the new *Review* literature is given a back seat, but all the seats are good; and literature is treated at least as a living interest. I never saw the reasons for the old adversity but I see the reasons for the new prosperity in the eager immediate potent grapple with topics which advance upon the thinker from the forum and the market rather than from the study." Thus, if the *Christian Examiner* had come to New York and lost its soul, the *North American* had come and gained not only its body but its opinions. Boston might grumble as much as she pleased that the magazine had entirely departed from its old critical fastidiousness, but New York knew that she had touched her rival under the fifth rib, where had pulsed the very centre and core of her being. As for critical fastidiousness, what were contemplation and sentiment and ideality so long as one remained only a Saint Simeon Stylites on a pillar!

But to return to our pigeon-hole again (after this little forward voyage with that "extravagant and erring spirit," the *North American*). Only one other aspect in the period may detain us here. We quote from a *Round Table* of 1867.

A magazine has long been known as among the useful adjuncts to the business of a larger publishing house, and it would seem that it is now becoming recognised as an indispensable appliance of any whose operations are on a grand scale. Already there are in our three publishing cities fourteen of the book-publishing firms which among them issue twenty-one periodicals, varying in grade from quarterly and professional or scientific reviews to weekly and juvenile journals, a majority of which have come into life within a very short time. Besides these are New York branches of three London houses publishing eight magazines, and rumour says four more of our publishers are to give us new monthlies. The magazine mania — for it is scarcely less — prevailed in England for many months before it appeared here. That Messrs. Putnam and Lippincott will do well with their new monthlies is a matter of course. It is clearly out of the question that a book-publishing house of repute and large business connection should find a periodical otherwise than remunerative. That the taste of the public for literature has grown as well as its appetite is attested by recent successes which a few years ago could have found no sustaining clientage. There is one measure of paramount importance that must be hastened by this literary revival. Magazine-writing will become little less than a profession, a new class among us, and its members must be paid. Publishers will thus be forced to secure protection through an international copyright.

The facts of this editorial are, as usual, more impressive than the opinions — which well illustrate the futility of prophecy. Putnam, as we have seen, did not do well with his new monthly; and it was many a weary year before some publishers who were then doing well without an international copyright found the need of one become imperative.

## CHAPTER X

### HARPER'S — THE CONVERTED CORSAIR

IN George W. Child's memoirs there is a story which makes an exclamation point seem but a feeble toy. "I can recall," says he, "a solemn conversation in the office of the Harpers, then on Cliff Street. The four founders of the great firm were present. I was one of a group of Philadelphians and we were discussing the first number of Harper's new monthly. It seemed so certain to us that the publication would be a failure. 'It can't,' said one Philadelphian emphatically, 'last very long.' The only successful magazines then published in the United States were in Philadelphia — *Graham's*, *Godey's*, *Sartain's* and *Peterson's*."

One can understand under these circumstances (or perhaps under any) the peculiar bias of Philadelphians; but you will look in vain, in authors' letters and reminiscences, for any of those familiar chirps of satisfaction which heralded the hatching of almost all the other American magazines. You will find, instead, curses not loud but deep. Indeed, there was no reason why any one, besides the publishers themselves, should have hailed the advent of *Harper's* with joy except that notoriously inarticulate person, the Average Reader — and he, as was soon admitted even by the most disgruntled American author, was placed under an everlasting debt of gratitude. The Philadelphia magazines, so shortly to be extinguished or dimmed by the new luminary, might have merited the derision which they later received from those who now mocked the meat they had once gladly fed upon, but there was never any question that they had saved the

life of the struggling American author of professional potentiality — life which the paddles of the first transatlantic steamer had well nigh made an end of. For when it became possible to get English magazines once a fortnight, there had sprung up in New York numerous weeklies whose sole purpose was to serve the plunder piping hot; and had it not been for the Philadelphia magazines, the native author would have found no market whatever, so entirely had these weeklies driven out of existence the dealers who paid for home products. Though like all the magazines they were in the habit of printing for nothing what was worth scarcely more, to writers who were in demand Philadelphia paid prices deemed munificent in those days. And the writers, in return, were never weary of testifying that to her they owed creation, preservation, and what temporal blessings they possessed. And of that gratitude *Graham's* had the lion's share. The *United States Gazette* cautiously estimated that sometimes *Graham's* must be paying as much as five hundred dollars a number to American authors. But the figure was low, in spite of its being put forward as strapping.

"Graham says he would have given me one hundred and fifty dollars for the Legend of Brittany without the copyright," wrote Lowell in 1845, only three years after he had written jubilantly that he might safely reckon on earning four hundred dollars by his pen the following year. "We have spent as high as fifteen hundred dollars on a single number for authorship alone," said *Graham's* editorially in 1853. "This is more than twice the sum ever paid by any other magazine in America; while for years our minimum rate was eight hundred dollars per number." In its valedictory to *Sartain's*, which had made a splendid struggle for three years, there is a note of bitterness:

It has spent over fifteen thousand dollars for original contributions, and now it is hopelessly wrecked. The publishers spent money with a lavish hand to American writers, but the

flood of foreign literature overwhelmed the gallant book and she has gone down to rise no more. Will there *never* be pride enough in the American people to stand by those who support a national literature! We felt a year ago the demand for English magazine articles; the success of the reprint magazines confirmed what we felt; and we therefore doubled the number of our pages to give our readers, *in addition* to our former supply of original American articles, such papers from foreign sources as struck us of value or interest. We shall only add — in answer to carpers generally — that *Graham's* for the last ten years has paid over eighty thousand dollars to American writers.

This was in 1852 — two years after the establishment of a magazine which had helped to re-create and greatly profited by this demand for English magazine articles. *Graham's* had watched anxiously the growth of its competitor. "*Harper's* is a good *foreign* magazine, but it is not *Graham's* by a long way," had run an editorial in 1851. "The veriest worshipper of the dust of Europe will tire of the dead level of silly praise of John Bull upon every page. John hasn't *quite* the brains of all the family. Jonathan is not altogether a dolt in letters. Graham thinks he has a class of young writers now who ask no odds in a fair encounter — Lowell, Read, Legare, Godman, Whipple, Fields, Bayard Taylor, Stoddard, Hosmer, Street, Boker, Tuckerman, Hawthorne, Conrad, Moorhead and others of the young men." Many newspapers of the country were watching the struggle with indignation. "*Graham's* great rival now is *Harper's*," said one of them, "but *Graham's* equals it in amount and quality of literary contents and far exceeds it in beauty of illustration — and in the fact that its contributors are all honestly paid for their labours." Said another: "*Graham's* is now what *Harper's* should have been. *Harper's* is a grand failure." Upon which remark Graham commented grimly: "Our friend is a wag in his way. We have done more for magazine writers than *Harper's* will ever do, but one hundred and thirty-five thousand copies a month does not seem to us a grand failure." This same year of 1852 Boker was writing to Stoddard:

Graham is our only stand-by in these evil times. He is a man with a big soul and a gentleman, but his liberality, great as it is, cannot support an author. Alas! alas! Dick, is it not sad that an American author cannot live by magazine writing? And this is wholly due to the want of an international copyright law.

In these documents, then, we find one of the reasons why we encounter so little pleasant mention of *Harper's* in authors' correspondence in the fifties. Furthermore, there was an indefinable but spacious air of self-righteousness about the magazine which, taken with what was considered the unique opulence of its publishers, seems to have greatly annoyed its critics — and not the less, of course, because they were less successful. There was, for instance, none of the ingratiating impudence which Willis had exhibited a few years before when he established the *Corsair*. Lest the romance of this title should deceive any one, Willis had proposed to name it the *Pirate*; and he editorially desired Henry Clay to take it into Congress as a people's exhibit of the results of an iniquitous law. "We shall convey to our columns," said he, "the cream and spirit of everything that ventures to light, in France, England and Germany. As to original American productions, we shall, as the publishers do, take what we can get for nothing, holding, as the publishers do, that while we can get Boz and Bulwer for a thank-ye or less, it is not pocket-wise to pay much for Halleck and Irving."

As frankly did Harpers announce their intention, but the implication was different. In their *New Monthly Magazine*, June, 1850, occurs A Word at the Start:

The design is to place within the reach of the great mass of the American people the unbounded treasures of the periodical literature of the present day. The leading authors of Great Britain and France, as well as of the United States, are now regular and constant contributors to the periodicals of their several countries. The publishers intend to place everything of permanent value and interest in this literature in the hands of people who up to now have been hopelessly excluded from it,

The columns of *Harper's* did not for a long time, however, contain any treasures of the "leading authors of the United States." In the Contents of volume one appear only a few names, leading or otherwise. They are Ik Marvel, William Howitt, Dr. Moore, Leigh Hunt, Albert Smith, Harriet Martineau, Frederika Bremer, and Robert Southey. Volume three announces that the best talent of the country has been engaged in writing and illustrating original articles, and the magazine now contains regularly one or more original articles upon some topic of historical or national interest by some able and popular writer, illustrated by from fifteen to thirty wood-engravings. In the Contents now appear the American names: G. W. Curtis, G. P. Morris, Epes Sargent, Jacob Abbott, John S. C. Abbott, B. J. Lossing. Setting aside Curtis, who was one of the editors, and Lossing, whose historical articles were a convenient vehicle for illustrations, the leading authors of the country had no reason to regard this list with satisfaction. Volume ten announces that, while they have not neglected the rich stores of foreign literature, they have gradually enlarged the list of their editors and contributors till it includes the names of a large portion of the most popular writers of the country, and nothing has been wanting to induce them to contribute their best productions. But the Contents presents only the names of J. T. Headley, G. P. R. James, J. Abbott, S. I. Prime, Thomas Ewbank, G. W. Greene, Elias Loomis.

Certainly, no material inducement should have been wanting. "Although but six months have elapsed," said volume one, "we have a monthly issue of fifty thousand." Volume three speaks of the present circulation as enormous, saying, and with justice, that it has come about simply because the magazine gives a greater amount of reading matter, of a higher quality, in better style and at a cheaper price, than any other periodical ever published. Volume six proclaims a monthly edition of one hundred and eighteen thousand, and it had to be electrotyped.



Volume seven announced a gain of seventeen thousand over the last. Thus in four short years the magazine was financially able to stimulate the best writers to contribute to its columns. The *Atlantic* had not yet come to afford the Boston men an outlet; and many New Yorkers were complaining that they could not get a living price for their wares at home; while the Philadelphia magazines, as we have seen, were offering less and less, on account of the shrivelling of their subscription. The best writers of America had either been uncharacteristically deaf to inducement, or *Harper's* considered that they were already included in its columns. In the first decade of its successful existence *Harper's* had printed, by the standard of contemporary judgment, scarcely a notable name. The home-grown treasures it had contributed came chiefly from the store of the Abbott brothers — Jacob, the father of the immortal Rollo and Lucy, and of many histories which on a somewhat wider canvas presented life in the same spirit of domestic didactics; and John, who piled up during his industrious and exemplary existence more than fifty volumes of a moral, religious and historical nature. In 1870 he wrote:

I prepare a monthly article of twenty pages for *Harper's*, and am writing two books, one on the history of Louis XIV and the other the History of the Christian Religion. Last week I wrote the tenth chapter of this history. I have sent the first four chapters of Louis XIV to *Harper's* and have four other chapters completed. In addition to this, I have full charge of not a small parish, with all its pulpit and parochial labours; it is a rule with me to prepare one new sermon every week.

It is no wonder that Henry James, senior, complained of the "stupid Methodism" of *Harper's*, or that here and there among the sturdy middle class it so triumphantly catered to were some who remembered that even in the Scriptures it had been written that man should not live by bread alone.

In 1859, after almost a decade of *Harper's*, Godkin could write, from the city which now raised the ancient

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Philadelphia boast of the greatest periodical in the world, to a friend in England, his apprehension about the financial embarrassment of the *Atlantic* — with never a hint that *Harper's* was existent:

Our one, our only, magazine is again in danger. We have been for many years dying for a magazine and have been making divers unsuccessful attempts to have one of a high order, that would rival your *Blackwood* or *Fraser*. Our last attempt was *Putnam's Magazine*, which, after a brilliant career of a few years, was at last driven into that last haven of all crazy literary craft, "first-class wood-engravings." Boston stepped into the breach, however, and set on foot the *Atlantic*, which was to be kept up to the highest point of excellence by contributions from both sides of the Atlantic. The British quota, however, was not sent in very long, and it has owed a very remarkable success almost entirely to native pens. The articles were rarely either so elaborate or so profound, or even so varied in interest, as those of its English contemporaries, since that ripe and careful cultivation of which good magazine literature is the fruit is by no means so general here as with you; but they were incomparably better than any similar recueil that has yet made its appearance.

In reviewing the early history of its magazine, the House of Harper, published in 1912, discloses an uneasy appreciation of the need for an apologist. "If *Harper's Magazine* had been started upon the plan of exclusive American authorship," it says, "the limitation thus imposed would have been an obstacle to the development of its present comprehensive and popular scope. Every other American magazine published in 1850 had a definite plan which determined its field, and, as a matter of fact, had filled its field and had attained its full development. As regards literary appeal, the conditions of American literature at that time fixed a narrow limit. In this situation the Harpers did, as magazine publishers, what for many years they had been doing in their book business — they brought to readers the richest treasures of literature wherever they were to be found, which at that time was mostly in periodical publications of Europe." Yet in a moment the apologist hastens to announce that its eclectic

character — in spite of the limitations of American literary appeal — rapidly disappeared in its very infancy. Now, it does not appear that the work of the chief native authors had undergone any change whatever by the time *Harper's* decided to give a more national tone to its pages. But even had this been the case, its readers would not have benefited thereby; for the chief concession the magazine had made to native authorship was in articles especially designed as vehicles for the illustrations that had been the other great reason for the financial success of the publication — “popular” scientific and historical and travel articles, which cheered the family circle without any danger of inebriation. These were supplied by American ministers and writers of journalistic calibre, but for the most part all expression of thought or imagination was imported from England. A moment's marshalling of the men so limited in literary appeal as to fail entirely to meet the demands of the early *Harper's* will convince one of the impressiveness of their exclusion. We may find them in Parke Godwin's address upon Curtis:

When we began *Putnam's*, among our promised contributors — and nearly all of them made good their promise — were Irving, Bryant, Emerson, Longfellow, Lowell, Hawthorne, Thoreau, Ripley, Miss Sedgwick, Mrs. Kirkland, J. P. Kennedy, Fred Cozzens, Richard Grant White, Melville, Stoddard, Stedman, Read, Maria Lowell.

The secret of the exclusion of these writers is afforded almost in the same paragraph. “If we were asked why we started a monthly magazine,” said Fletcher Harper, “we would have to say frankly that it was as a tender to our business, though it has grown into something quite beyond that.” The business of the house, the author states quite as frankly a little later:

The Harper brothers saw an enormous reading public in a country of cheap literature and an immense store of material at their disposal in England, more various and more attractive than the home supply; and they resolved to bring the two together.

*Harper's Magazine*, in short, intended to do on a wider basis only what Harper's Family Library had done — and bring as many kinds of English literary goods as possible to an American market.

There is no reason why it should not have done so, but in the process of the lucrative enterprise no outsider, except the Average Reader, had any cause for gratitude. *Knickerbocker*, *Putnam's*, *Graham's* and the Philadelphia sisterhood had all likewise fought according to the measure of their intelligence for their place in the sun, yet they had fought for the fatherland also — they had fallen in the combat, it is true, but they had gone down with the sustaining thought of having assisted in furthering the cause of American literature. Although *Harper's* splendidly atoned for the sins of her youth, her punishment endures now when those sins have been forgotten by the present grateful generation. Scarcely, in the lives and letters of our illustrious of fifty years ago, do we come across an appreciative and endearing mention of her name, like that which has so often bejewelled all the others. *Putnam's*, while the light of her founder still shone in her, contributed generously to the advancement of periodical literature in America, but not the least of her gifts was bestowed in departing from the field it was not given her to win — the nationalisation of *Harper's*. The *Atlantic* continued the fight, and when *Scribner's* came along in 1870 to make its notable American success, it had become no longer possible for an American magazine to be mainly nourished from over seas. The converted corsair had metamorphosed into one of our most reliable merchantmen; and thus we may echo the House of Harper in closing the retrospect of its magazine: "Looking back upon the one hundred and twenty-one volumes, the first impression made upon the mind is their real exposition of human activity and interest in the half-century and" — when it at last made its delayed appearance — "our steady growth in literary and artistic excellence."

For a long time after American authors of a higher rank began to appear, the magazine and the other periodicals of the house had but little room for them. Three novels of Dickens', four of Thackeray's, with the Four Georges, one of Bulwer's, two of George Eliot's, six of Trollope's rather crowded its earlier years. "In the period 1860-1880," says the House of Harper, "not infrequently we would have two and even three foreign serials running at the same time in each one of our three periodicals." As the prominent English novelists did not, in their opinion, often write good short stories, here seemed to offer the American opportunity; indeed, the English serials, the account continues, caused special stress to be laid upon short stories of American life. Yet the stories submitted could not have been very satisfactory, for on the occasion of Justin McCarthy's first visit to America they gave him an order for forty-five in a batch. These, with an industry which even John Abbott might have envied, he finished and delivered before returning to the smiling shore of Britain. Besides lecturing right and left and acting as the literary editor of the *Independent!* He must have looked back upon his tidy trip with satisfaction.

All the more because, although he went to America to make money, his immediate literary success came as a surprise to him. "Up to the time of my visiting New York," he says, "I had published nothing bearing my name, but I had published three books anonymously. I found on my arrival one of my novels passing as a serial through *Harper's*, which became the means of introducing me personally to the house, with which I have had many dealings since of the most cordial and satisfactory kind." McCarthy does not, unfortunately, tell us how it happened that a serial of his could be running in New York without his knowledge. But the confusions arising from the lack of copyright gave room for endless predicaments as well as endless exploitations. William James Stillman throws some light on the magazine phase

of the situation in the Autobiography of a Journalist:

In 1871 I became the London literary agent for *Scribner's Magazine*, afterward the *Century*. I was instructed to secure a story from a certain author and contracted for the proof sheets of her next novel, about to be published in England in a certain magazine. On the announcement of *Scribner's* of the coming publication, the (American) firm who published her prior works announced that they would not respect the agreement with the author, but would pirate the story. As the result of the quarrel, *Scribner's* resigned the story to its rival on payment to the lady of the sum agreed on. But now appeared an utterly unsuspected state of things: the London magazine had already sold the proof sheets of the story to a third American house, and an exposé of the situation showed that English publishers had been in the practice of selling the advance proofs of their most popular works and recouping the half of the price paid the authors. I wrote to the English papers, which were just now indulging in one of their periodical outbreaks against American literary piracy, and dwelt on the hitherto unknown point that the depredations on the author's interests were committed by the English publishers, who sold to the American the wares the latter was accused of stealing, whereas the fact was that he bought and paid equally for the right of publication, while the English publishers continued to reprint American books without the least regard for analogous transatlantic rights. . . . I was treated with a torrent of abuse. Only Mr. Trollope came forward to sustain me, with the statement that he had received more from Harpers than from his English publishers. The author whose novel had been the occasion of the trouble declared that English authors ought to make me a testimonial, but from no other source did I receive a word of thanks.

To follow all the implications of this interesting story would lead us far afield. There was, at any rate, no lack of British material, and the success of it in the magazine amply justified the admirable business perception which had thus made a market for it. As Charles Nordhoff said, "Fletcher Harper made few mistakes about his public, because he had created it." And even had he been seeking to force American writers down its captious throat, there was a striking confirmation of the wisdom of his policy. We are told that after the conclusion of the war the edition of the magazine fell off so greatly

that he seriously considered terminating its publication; but *Our Mutual Friend* and Wilkie Collin's *Armadale*, especially the latter, revived its circulation. After all, even when one has created a public, one is as much at its mercy as if one had not. It is with gratitude that we find that in the mid seventies this infant turned giant had at last come to the appreciation of Longfellow (who had for some years been getting from one hundred to one hundred and fifty dollars a poem in other magazines, and for whose *Hanging of the Crane* Robert Bonner, catering to the exclusively intellectual readers of the *Ledger*, had paid three thousand dollars). The poet records in 1877 that he has received one thousand dollars from them for the right of first publication of *Kéramos* in their magazine, his earliest mention of any dealings with them, although he had, through the kindly services of Fields, sold them *Morituri Salutamus* in 1875. By 1882 Higginson also, having outlived the earlier limitations of his appeal, was publishing there chapters of his *Larger History of the United States*: and notes, "I have written one of my *Harper's* papers regularly every month for the last eleven months." And in 1885 — when he engaged to write a weekly article for *Harper's Bazar*, similar in tone to his *Woman's Journal* papers, but not entering upon the still delicate question, from a publisher's point of view, of suffrage — he speaks of his great pleasure in an audience of one hundred thousand people listening to his voice in all parts of the civilised world.

In artistic excellence, however, the record of America's steady growth began from the very beginning. This was for precisely the same reason that the other had not. It was found before the first year was out that the patrons wanted pictorial illustrations; and these, if they were to have any appositeness, were better procured in America. The prejudice of high-class readers against "picture-books" has historically been one of the most amusing of their many affectations; and, like a great many others,

it had little counterpart in their actual practice. Intellectual people liked pictures whenever they were interesting; when they were not, it afforded an excellent opportunity to exhibit a fine chastity of taste. The three portraits of contemporary historians which enlivened the first number of *Harper's* naturally filled no family circle with clamorous joy, nor did the cautious adventures of the rest of the first volume. The numbers had, apart from fashion-plates, only about half a dozen pictures each, and almost all of them were of the highly uninteresting kind which have "literary associations." But crude by our standards as are the early wood-cuts, the fact that they bore any immediate and spontaneous relation to the text was very interesting in itself to readers for whom the funeral-baked steel-engravings of *Graham's* and *Godey's* had coldly furnished forth the wedding feast for so many years; and *Harper's*, emboldened by the great success of a new pictorial London paper, tried a flyer with some home-made descriptive articles rather elaborately and freshly illustrated. The experiment demonstrated. Until *Scribner's* was founded in 1870, *Harper's* had, except for a limited flight or two by the clipped-winged *Putnam's*, no competition in the new popular specialty. Their rival took a long leap ahead in the discovery and development of a new method of printing illustrations — to which perhaps more than to any other one item the success of the American magazine is to be ascribed — and *Harper's* naturally strained every nerve to come abreast of her once more. "The competition between the two," says the House of Harper, "became so keen that at times we paid as high as five hundred dollars for engraving one page. In 1888, when both the *Century* and *Scribner's* were in the field, the demand for first-class engravers was very great, and the market value of their work became a serious consideration for the publishers." Thus the competition waxed — to the chagrin and often to the cost of authors, who found their texts become decidedly second-fiddle — until the



invention of process reproduction in half-tone worked another revolution and began to take the place of wood-engraving. But with it the author was in no better case. Indeed, he had all the more reason to feel that by the decrees of heaven and publishers the artist was a pampered child of fortune. For he was still second-fiddle in prices, and the change allowed the artist to gloat over the engraver, whom he had accused of tampering constantly with his work; but no revolution of process is yet in sight which will compel the illustrator to stick to the author's text. Lafcadio Hearn broke his contract with *Harper's* when he found that he was getting less for his Japanese sketches than his illustrator, but his fancied superiority was as unwarrantable as his folly. Now — in the making of the modern magazine — abideth these three: the advertiser, the artist, and the author, and the least of these is the last.

The new journals of opinion founded during *Harper's* first decade and a little later reproached it for having none. But it is to be remembered that this was distinctly a new idea for a magazine which aimed at large popular circulation. Lewis Gaylord Clark, who was in charge of the "Drawer," had been editor of *Knickerbocker*, and that urbane old party would have thought it as bad taste to divide the company of gentlemen by uttering an opinion which all could not share as to raise his voice in the lurid accents of the *Ledger*. Another editor of *Harper's* was H. J. Raymond, who had plenty of opinions (proved by his having helped to found the *New York Times* and his resigning in five years in order to pay exclusive attention to it), but, like Curtis, who also had a mind of his own, he was not encouraged to express them. Indeed, when Curtis was very forcibly expressing his editorial opinion in the *Weekly* at a later date, Godkin of the *Nation* felt aggrieved that it ran counter to the personal opinion of the man. But the real editor, Fletcher Harper, kept his eye single unto the prospectus. This announced that the magazine intended to supply to

the family circle of every intelligent citizen in the United States, at so low a rate as to give it a value much beyond its price, everything of *general* interest and usefulness. And the family circle must not be disrupted by opinions. "We shall not, I trust," said Mrs. Malaprop, or some other Dogberry, "venture any opinions before ladies." It was many years before the ideal of the magazine — "that it should lie along the great lines of current thought" — was interpreted as other than merely expository. That it should not risk its great circulation by having opinions was naturally resented by those virtuous magazines which had thus limited theirs. The obvious safety of this course somewhat discredited, in the minds of its enemies, the obvious sanity of another — the middle path it took between the immoderation of slaveholder and of abolitionist. This was also thought to be dictated by prudence. It was, however, an opinion shared by every property-holder in New York; as was also the advocacy, after 1861, of the principles of the Republican party. Not, then, until it espoused Civil Service Reform, and later the nomination of Grover Cleveland, did its subscription list run any risk by reason of its ideas. And by that time it was beginning to be discovered that nobody gave up reading a magazine which was nine-tenths profitable entertainment merely because he disagreed with the other tenth. It was just about this era that Sarah Bernhardt became a great factor in our civilization by providing a topic of burning discussion in clubs and debating societies (a subject which agitated many editorial sanctums also): "Should we go to see an immoral actress? (Especially if foreign?)" But long before the *Magazine* ventured to have opinions of its own, it had intrusted them to the *Weekly*, issued in 1857. This, too, announced itself as "adopted for family reading"; but, being nearer a newspaper by three weeks, tradition justified it, family harmony notwithstanding, in speaking its mind. How long ago it seems since literary

magazines, like clergymen, were expected to have plenty of sentiments, but no alienating ideas!

Almost as long ago was it when publishers trusted it was not necessary for them to reiterate their assurance that nothing should ever be admitted to the pages of the magazine in the slightest degree offensive to delicacy or any moral sentiment. When *Harper's* added in volume five a department "Pictorial Comicalities"—the matter and manner of which was not very dissimilar to *Graham's* "Sips of Punch," begun in 1851 and followed later by "Original Comicalities"—it declared its intention with the utmost solemnity: "The most scrupulous care will be exercised that humour shall not pass into vulgarity or satire degenerate into abuse."

This whole subject of the sacredness of moral sentiments, which once so concerned our publishers, is, of course, extremely skittish. Nor is this the place to dwell upon the inevitable absurdities of a censor. It is not so long ago that the law of the English-speaking stage was, "Say anything you like about seduction, but be sure you call it flirtation—except, of course, in a farce"; and since mothers were writing to school teachers, "Don't teach my girl anything about her insides; 'taint no use, and besides it's rude." But surely few things are more apt to make us blush than the books we once called immoral. And the influence of our magazine publishers in prolonging our intellectual infancy must have been a powerful one. The announcements which bleat so proudly from all of their opening pages would no longer allure subscribers to-day, when the hearth has ceased to be a cloister and fathers have given up fondly conceiving that the family circle suspends its animation until they return with the hour of the evening lamp. The House of Harper provides a delightful illustration of how beneficent has been the flight of time. Can you fancy this happening in the sixties, for instance, when the moral sensitiveness of *Harper's* was appalling?

The Simpletons, afterward *Hearts Insurgent*, as it appeared in the magazine, was published by us in its original form as a book, with the title *Jude the Obscure*. We had said when he wrote us that he must assure us it would be in every respect suitable for a family magazine. He said it would not offend the most fastidious maiden; so we began it. It had not progressed far when he informed us that he was distressed to say the development of the story was carrying him into unexpected fields, and he proposed that we discontinue it or make any changes we desired. We wrote him that we were properly ashamed of every word of protest we had to write, but our rule was that the magazine should contain nothing which could not be read aloud in any family circle. Hardy, without any irritation, rewrote one of the chapters, and we made some modifications as the story ran.

Addisonian in its morality and its sentimentality, it was — in the beginning — following in all other respects the well-beaten and safe path. Unlike *Putnam's* and the *Atlantic*, it sought nothing new. The early issues lacked only a meteorological page to duplicate its forbears of a score of years before. The old titles to the old departments are all here, without any effort for individuality or originality — Literary and Scientific Miscellany, Literary Notices, Monthly Review of Current Events, Domestic and Foreign, Fashions. Only in the third volume is an attempt made to be interesting in the titles of the new departments, Editor's Drawer, Easy Chair, and Editor's Table. These headings, like Leaves from Punch, were stereotype, but not flavourless, and made some slight concession to erring humanity. They did not even exhibit any novelty in the type they employed — speaking according to sanctified precedent in the tiny voice of Alice's gnat, as if their time alone were worth a thousand pounds a minute. This third volume, by the way, announces that it cost more than either of its predecessors by five to ten thousand dollars! A lavish use of figures, which becomes all the more convincing when you remember that just at this time Graham mentioned (certainly not conservatively) one-fourth of the lesser amount as a thumping sum for a single number, even when most

of his authors were paid. The Editor's Table purposed to discuss the higher questions of ethics and principles, the Drawer was to serve viands otherwise rejectable, the Easy Chair was for light and pointed social chat. The last was undertaken in 1853 by Curtis, although other men contributed to it for several years. Curtis had become a Harper author with Nile Notes in 1851, and when he became associated with the magazine he was an editor of *Putnam's*, which a little later spoke its mind so freely on the policy of its editor's other household. As the two publishers were on the most ticklish terms, never could a man have had more trouble with his double life; and he doubtless returned devout thanks when he became monogamous again. In 1863 the Chair was made political editor of the *Weekly*. This year Mr. Howells joined the magazine, and Literary Notices reincarnated under the more attractive name of Editor's Study. Here he was succeeded by Charles Dudley Warner. The trio is a gracious and accomplished one, of which any magazine — or era — might be proud. When the *Bazar* appeared in 1867, Curtis took a department in that also. The *Bazar* was the same canny compound of old and new which had made the other periodicals so brilliantly successful. Its sub-title, A Repository of Fashion and Instruction, might have graced many of our eighteenth century magazines; but the ingenious advertising which heralded it and its pictorial policy were an outcome of Harper's specialised experience. The first Easy Chair, so charmingly endeared to later generations by its succession of genial occupants, is of interest.

After our more severe editorial work is done — the scissors laid in our drawer and the Monthly Record made as full as our pages will bear, of history — we have a way of throwing ourselves back into an old red-backed easy chair that has long been an ornament of our dingy office, and indulging in an easy and careless overlook of the gossiping papers of the day, and in such chit-chat with chance visitors as keeps us informed of the drift of the town-talk. Having made our course good, we mean to catch up in these few additional pages those lighter whiffs

from the great world of opinion which come floating to us as we sit here in our Easy-Chair.

Thus it records the fire of December, 1853, which cost the firm a million and a half dollars and destroyed the entire January number of the magazine — and incidentally demonstrated most triumphantly the Harper efficiency by delaying it no more than ten days:

It is now just about a year since we rescued our Easy-Chair from the falling timbers and the general wreck of our great fire. This Easy-Chair can never forget how along the wires came thrilling a thousand messages of cheerful encouragement, of prompt offers of aid, and of the most generous sympathy. But not only is our Easy-Chair planted again, but a great part of the building in which it stands is restored. The same old square between Cliff Street and Pearl Street will be occupied by the new structure.

“Wesley Harper told me,” wrote Charles Nordhoff, “that the fire seemed at first a heaven-sent opportunity to give up business. They were abundantly wealthy. ‘We never dared let our children know how well off we were,’ he said, ‘for fear of spoiling their lives.’” Nordhoff tells his experience in *Some Editors I have Known*:

I came into the firm in the fall of 1856. Mr. Fletcher Harper was then in his prime and planning the establishment of a weekly paper. I was a young man and very much unknown. I had offered them a small book for children and had signed the contract, when he suddenly asked me if I should like to come to them. I was to have no specific duties, but would have to find my place and work. On my first appearance in Franklin Square I felt as uncomfortable as a very young cat in a very strange garret. I found it literally true that for a while I had no regular duties. I wrote some things, of which a few were used; I read foreign papers and made extracts; at the suggestion of an editor, whose kindness to a very depressed young man I have never forgotten, I “gutted” a new book of travel and adventure — that is to say, I made out of the most readable parts of it a magazine article, and this, to my delight, was printed; and of this kind of work I did later a good deal. Then I became one of the readers. . . . Mr. Fletcher Harper had a sound popular judgment. In respect to magazine articles he often stood alone — but his judgment was final. “Whether we ought to publish it” meant with him whether it would be

intelligible, interesting and useful to the average American reader. Mr. Harper made very few mistakes. He was a most lovely character, unpretentious and considerate to all in his employ. I suppose the other brothers would have freely owned that Mr. Fletcher Harper was the ablest of them all, but they were a united band.

Like Beecher, he was an editor without a desk. "He was a great editor," wrote Dr. Lyman Abbott. "I do not think Mr. Harper ever wrote a line for publication. I doubt whether he ever read a manuscript but he created the *Magazine* and the *Weekly* and the *Bazar* and pervaded them with his own informing spirit. He created a new school of journalism."

In 1874 *Harper's* followed the lead of *Scribner's* and the *Atlantic* in introducing the transformed South and its new writers. This exceedingly great service to the cause of the American reunion, as well as of American letters, had been begun the year before. Its effect upon the Southern attitude toward the North was immediate. "Contrary to the idea which had prevailed in the South after the war," says Mr. Edwin Mims in his *Life of Lanier*, "that Northern people would refuse to recognise Southern genius, it was the Northern magazines which made possible the success of Southern literature." *Harper's* in January, 1874, began a series of articles on the New South, and the next year Constance Fenimore Woolson began to write her Southern articles. In 1887 Southern literature, thanks to *Scribner's* and the *Atlantic*, had now become of such bulk and quality as to hold a conspicuous place in periodical output, and *Harper's* devoted an appreciative article to it, saying that it had introduced a stream of rich warm blood. In opening another new field *Harper's* was nip and tuck with *Scribner's*, but, as before, the latter seems to have nipped first. This was the issuing of an English edition. It started off in 1880 with a large circulation, and there was in the beginning a difference in the editorial departments. "The delicacy and beauty of the illustrations," says the House of Harper, "found nothing comparable in Europe ;

and it was the English edition of *Harper's* which made Europe acknowledge our superior work in rapid fine art printing." But *Scribner's* also rather piqued itself on making Europe sit up and take notice — the inborn craving of every true American heart — and feeling that she was ahead of her rival in illustration, as well as in priority of the invasion of London, she naturally claimed that honour. "The founding of an English edition," said she in 1881, "seemed on the face of it like carrying coals to Newcastle. It was not many years since American monthlies largely lived upon the productions, sometimes bought and sometimes stolen, of English writers. Starting with an edition of two thousand, it now issues in England eighteen thousand. The daring of the publishers has given an impetus to American literature in England, two other magazines having since issued English editions."

Her rivalry with *Scribner's-Century* was always a touchy subject with *Harper's*. Dr. H. M. Field in his paper, *The Evangelist*, wrote in 1894 a straddling article entitled *Is There a Falling Off in Our Magazines, or Are They Better Than Ever?* It was difficult to extract his meaning, for what he took away with one hand he gave back with the other. But it was at least apparent that he had praised the *Century*, and condemned some qualities which *Harper's* shared with the other popular magazines. "The idea of *Harper's* learning a lesson from the *Century* is not objectionable," wrote Mr. H. M. Alden in reply, "as I hope we are not above learning a lesson from any quarter. There would have been no competition if the *Century* had not so entirely adopted the plan of *Harper's* from beginning to end, even in its editorial department. This was a very comprehensive lesson taught by *Harper's* to the *Century*, as, indeed, to every popular illustrated magazine that could hope for wide success." As we have already seen, neither the idea of their editorial departments nor of addressing the average family circle originated with *Harper's*; what the



magazine chiefly resented was the imputation of "stooping to a lower level of readers." But it was an accusation that once the firm would have gloried in, and did when charged with it by certain unsuccessful magazines. *Harper's* had grown with the growing age, that is all; and was a little ashamed to recall that its estimate of the average family circle had once been somewhat lower than now could be remembered with any pride. As for the rest of Dr. Field's charge, it ran as follows:

They have carried illustrations to such an extent that they (the magazines) are becoming more and more picture-books, very beautiful to the eye, but a little wearisome to one who looks for something besides "embellishments," while in their contents there is a little too much of froth and foam for my antiquated taste. Whereas I once felt that life was hardly worth living if I did not have my monthly magazines, I now feel that I could at least endure existence if those stars in the literary firmament should disappear.

Mr. Alden wrote in somewhat pointed rejoinder to this part of the accusation:

I will admit that we are not making so prominent the editorial features as we did a generation ago—simply because other agencies meet the popular need. We never treated political or religious questions; but recently, far more than formerly, have we laid open the more hidden phases of European politics and the most important phases of religious development. It is a good thing for you and me (who are growing older) that there are now special periodicals, religious, scientific, artistic and political, to which we can resort for the satisfaction of our scholarly interests in these several fields, untroubled and undisturbed by the fluctuating and ever-changing moods of a world that insists upon living as strongly as we insist upon studying.

This was a good enough answer, but there were obviously three better ones which he was constrained from making. It would perhaps have been impolitic to express his surprise that any one could prefer the didactic and wishy-washy tone of the old *Harper's* to the tone of the modern magazine; it would perhaps have been impolite to point to the pages of the dull and feeble *Evangelist* as the sort of thing they had now learned to avoid; and it

would perhaps have proved embarrassing to inquire what in that year's contents had given Dr. Field the impression of prevailing foam and froth. Merely to open the two bound volumes of that year gives a reminiscent delight. Where could be found a more varied, substantial, and well-seasoned feast? Dr. Field confessed to as much loftiness of spirit about stories as about pictures — but friends who had read them didn't feel repaid for their time. Well, they were by Miss Wilkins, Constance Woolson, Ruth McEnery Stuart, Sarah Orne Jewett, Egbert Craddock, Owen Wister, R. H. Davis, and Howard Pyle. As for serials, the year was made remarkable by one of the most exquisite of American romances — *A Kentucky Cardinal*, by James Lane Allen — and *Trilby*, by Du Maurier, which if it stooped to a lower level of readers, stooped to conquer the world, since it was by universal admission more popular with more kinds of readers than any other serial ever published. But to turn to something Dr. Field at least would not recoil from unread, since it provided the educational and informational food he craved, there were, among an opulent list of topics, *Charleston in 1861*, *Egypt and Chaldea in Recent Discoveries*, *Emperor William's Stud Farm and Hunting Forest*, *The English Senate*, *Russia and Her Jews*, *Tuberculosis and Its Prevention*, *Relation of Life to Style in Architecture*, a series of articles on *Great American Industries* and some studies of the *Comedies of Shakespeare*, together with instalments of Mr. Howells's charming literary recollections. Other authors were Frederic Remington, George W. Smalley, Edwin Lord Weeks, Poultney Bigelow, and Arthur T. Hadley — a light and frothy crew! It was a golden year. What volume of *Knickerbocker's* or *Putnam's* or *Graham's* or *Godey's* could have made his life more worth living when he was young? Dr. Field confessed that he might be growing old, but what rose-misted reminiscence of youth could so enhalo any periodical in the whole history of America as to entitle

it to stand beside the plain fact of *Harper's*, 1894! And except for the beatific chance of the two serials, the year was not unrepresentative. Fashions in literature come and go, and the worst as well as the best of magazines must follow them; after a season of grey half-tints and an exasperating cultivation of nuances, swings in a season of splurge and an equally exasperating welter of red blood — with the change the individual liking may expand or contract, but it should admit, if it recognise that a magazine is published for more than one subscriber, a steady level of catholic excellence in *Harper's* which it would be difficult to suggest ways of surpassing.

## CHAPTER XI

### RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PEACE HAVE MISSED EACH OTHER

THE first distinctively religious magazine printed in America was the *Christian History*, 1743-45. The second came twenty years later and presented two unusual features. It was printed in German and used in its twelfth number the first German types cast in this country. The second feature was not duplicated until the appearance over a century later of Sunday School organs. It was not for sale but was distributed without money and without price. In spite of its prodigality, it continued to be published at Germantown from 1764 to 1770. Though most of the subscribers to the other early religious magazines got them for nothing, it was not by the intention of the proprietors. Foreseeing the delinquency of their patrons, some magazines made sure of a fund to keep them going. But this was sometimes perfidiously withdrawn, as in the case of the *United States Christian* in 1796; and the magazine after a hand to mouth existence on subscriptions only, perished. Many of the magazines gravely pledged every cent of their profits to the missionary cause, although they must have known that if they paid expenses they would be succeeding beyond hope. So soon did guile begin in religious periodicals.

Of the eighteenth century magazines, however, comparatively few are devoted to religion. A glance at the list of our early publications shows why. Almost the entire publishing output of the period consisted of religious books and tracts. The general magazine, indeed, seems to have reckoned upon elbowing its way into a community where most of the lettered were devout, simply

because it afforded some variety to the everlasting diet of disquisitions. But it did not, for the most part, venture too boldly. For a long time it was as much religious as literary; just as when the religious magazine began to emerge later, it was for a long time as much literary as religious. Here is a title which sounds edifying in the extreme yet it heralded nothing distinctively religious — the *Young Man's Magazine* (Philadelphia 1786) "Containing the Substance of Moral Philosophy and Divinity, selected from the works of the most eminent for Wisdom, Learning and Virtue Among the Ancients and Moderns." Nevertheless, there is a smack of this-worldliness about it which one does not savour in the title, the *Theological Magazine* (New York 1796-99) "A Synopsis of Modern Religious Sentiment." But this editor announced that he particularly desired to please. Not only did he hope to have all his pieces original and recently written, but he wanted them short also — sermons thus being in all three particulars disqualified. "Anecdotes, remarkable Providences, and the experiences of Dying Christians preferred." Some religious magazines, however, spread this table with the stern fare of sermons only, as was the case with the *Royal Spiritual* or the *Christian's Grand Treasure*. By Several Divines (1771).

It took the *Baptist Missionary Messenger*, started in 1803, five years to complete its first volume; but now, more than a century, it can look back indulgently on the intermittent chills and fever of its infancy. Another Baptist magazine, labouring under the singularly unattractive title of *Analytical Repository*, had been attempted in 1801, but could not survive. In the very incomplete list of eighteen magazines which Isaiah Thomas mentioned in 1810, only four are religious. The *Panoplist* and the *Christian Monitor* of Boston, the *Evangelist* of Hartford, the *Churchman's Magazine* of New York. To the somewhat sharp dealing on the part of the last named, we owe a fifth religious periodical, the *Magazine of Ecclesiastical History*. A printer who had been given the

contract for the *Churchman's* had been sent South by the editors to canvass for subscribers, and while on his mission the printing was coolly withdrawn from him and placed elsewhere. To get even he started a religious magazine of his own (to which, let us hope, he was able to shift all the subscribers he had drummed up!). Thus, as might have aptly quoted some naïve contemporary divine (of another persuasion, of course) doth the Lord make the wrath of man to please Him.

The early religious periodicals had been for the most part in the interests of Christianity at large, and the few which were denominational were only mildly so. But since sermons were their chief religious provender and they were published by Church societies, it was inevitable that as time went on all the sects should have their own representatives. Of the one hundred and thirty-seven periodicals begun between 1815 and 1833, Mr. W. B. Cairns says that about fifty were religious in character. In the West the emotional element in religion received more attention, but in the East the discussion of theology remained supreme. It was carried on with fierce intensity. The entire literary strength of the smaller towns was exhausted in the flowering of one religious organ; and even Boston, at the period of her brightest intellects, diverted most of her intellectual energy to theological controversy. At the close of this period came a great religious awakening through all the States, which for a while sought in varying forms a larger emotional expression, but in the decade 1835-45 ecclesiastical turmoil reached its climax.

In all of the churches except the Catholic, had arisen controversies which demanded their own special mouth-pieces. Even in the Church of England, which after the Revolution organised into the Protestant Episcopal Church, the retention of old types under new conditions gave rise to dissensions. Just as it became the most influential religious body in the country, the Presbyterian Church was in 1837 sundered by its great schism.

There were three parties in the society, and there was that year for the first time in seven years an Old-School majority in the Assembly. Whereupon, without notice or specification, it excommunicated four-ninths of its membership. For thirty years almost half of the church — under the same name, doctrines, ritual, and discipline — existed separately. Naturally, the organs of the ex-Presbyterians, thus conceived by sin and created in wrath, devoted themselves more to light than to sweetness. Such high-handed methods did not bring about absolute rupture in the other bodies, but in all of them internal discord cried aloud for vengeance. “The *Churchman* and other periodicals,” says Archdeacon Tiffany in his history of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America, “evidenced the growth of church interest, but also increase of church strife, which they did nothing to allay but everything to inflame.” The Congregationalists had early developed a liberal body which was moving towards Unitarianism. The *Monthly Anthology* which several liberalists had started in 1803 was met by the *Panoplist* in 1805, founded “by an association of Friends to Evangelical Truth,” and this began at once to force the Liberals to define their position.

Thus, everywhere there were controversies; and each voiced its righteous indignation in the existing church organs or created others for the same purpose. And each man wrote as if he might never change his mind again. Orestes Brownson, far more temperate than most in his denunciations, passed through Baptist, Presbyterian, and Unitarian churches to become Roman Catholic at last. When no suitable temple could be found for the enlarging soul, one was constructed forthwith. “How can I live,” said Dr. Dollinger, “in a country where they found a new church every day!” Emerson, Ripley, W. H. Channing, Pierpont all began as clergymen and moved into a wider world, but before they went threats of heresy trials were rife. Turn where you might, you heard angry and harsh voices hurtling from the religious arena. An

inspection of the religious magazines of the first half of the nineteenth century, recalls the story told of a Scotch minister who, having written a particularly melting tract on the Divine Love, asked a friend to whom he had submitted his previous tract on the Divine Wrath against schismatists, what he should name it. "Why not call it," answered his friend, "Come to Jesus, by the author of Go to the Devil?"

Between the unsuccessful early attempts to float religious magazines of a mild sectarianism and the later hectic activity in founding periodicals which flourished on mutual vituperation, had interposed a decided lull. In it, religious magazines grew more and more infrequent in their issues and the subscribers more and more languid in their support. When the Episcopal Church of Vermont began in 1813 the quarterly *Theological Magazine and Religious Repository*, the editor announced that monthlies calculated to convey religious instruction had most of them been discontinued, and he believed that if the churches could not support a monthly they might support a quarterly. But this same year another editor, basing his reasoning on the same phenomenon, arrived at a diametrically different conclusion. Why should not a religious periodical supply the news also, and come out as often as a Gazette? The idea was destined to elevate the religious press of America into first rank, not only at home but among the publications of the entire world. As far as can be seen, it was destined also to have another result of perhaps equal importance — namely, to defer for a great many decades the establishment of any permanent literary magazine by largely decreasing the available audience for one. In Philadelphia, which had mothered every other new experiment in literature and was to mother many more, was started the religious weekly newspaper, the *Remembrancer*. The innovation took root at once. Ten journals in various parts of the country were quickly founded in imitation. The *Boston Recorder and Telegraph* and *Zion's Herald* had a circu-



lation of five thousand each by 1826; and the *Watchman*, the *Christian Register*, and the *Universalist Magazine* printed a thousand copies a week. By 1828 there were thirty-seven of these religious newspapers and one of them, the *Christian Advocate*, had a weekly circulation of fifteen thousand — the largest, it was claimed, then reached by any newspaper in the world, not excepting the *London Times*. This paper was published by the Methodist Book Concern in New York in 1826. In the two years it had already devoured the *Missionary Journal* of Charleston, South Carolina, and it leapt to its supreme position by the simple device of finishing off its repast with the Boston *Zion's Herald*; and for two years more it did not run the risk of losing a single old subscriber by dropping the name of either of its constituents. A man must have felt that he got his money's worth when he took in for one subscription the *Christian Advocate and Missionary Journal and Zion's Herald*. Dr. Howard Bridgman says that in 1833 the circulation of religious papers in New York City exceeded the circulation of all its secular newspapers, and it was the penny daily started by the New York *Sun* which first made the newspaper proper a formidable competitor. The Philadelphia idea of grafting the religious element upon the news journal made its first near approach to literature when it was seized upon by Nathaniel Willis in the Boston *Recorder*. This aimed to do slightly more of the same sort of thing that the *Christian Science Monitor* does to-day — to give the news and an editorial presentation of public affairs uncoloured by partisanship, and to introduce as much religious intelligence as could be made consistent with this aim. The paper continued an independent existence until 1867, when it was engulfed in the embrace of a young and lusty rival, the *Congregationalist* begun in 1849. For the Baptists the *Watchman* begun in 1819 absorbed the *Christian Reflector* in 1848 and the *Christian Era* in 1875, and still sends out its cry. The *Examiner* is a seven-branched candlestick and shines with

the light of six other luminaries which it gathered to itself. The *Religious Herald*, 1828, still continues. Before the religious denominational magazine had time to gain as firm a foothold in America as in Europe, the weekly religious newspaper had established itself and taken all the patronage. Before the religious magazine had discovered that strife was the law of life, the religious weekly, already attractive by reasons of furnishing the secular news, had made its position invulnerable by the superior advantages it offered for immediate retort in controversial discussion.

In the meantime, the literary element had been growing, and particularly up Boston way. The *Monthly Anthology* had formed the starting point of the half-religious, half-literary impulse which was so marked a characteristic of the first New England Unitarians and of which our New England literature is so largely an embodiment. When the *Anthology* went to its rest, they continued writing for its reincarnation, the *North American*, and for the various religious papers of Boston. William Ellery Channing, who was minister in Boston from 1803 to 1842, wrote innumerable book reviews for the *Christian Examiner*; and Theodore Parker's pen was busy not only in his own magazine but elsewhere. Both the *Massachusetts Quarterly* and the *Dial*, in their short brilliant lives, were very valuable in bringing to public expression the brainy men who, having passed from Liberal Congregationalism into Unitarianism, now felt compelled to let not even the last mentioned roomy dome shut them from heaven. The Unitarian clergymen, early and late, have always had a literary turn. William Ware, editor of the *Christian Examiner*, wrote often for *Knickerbocker* and was author of several novels which in themselves rather summed up the Unitarian blend of literature and religion, being of the type of which Ben Hur proved later the most successful example.

The *Christian Examiner*, 1824, was a development of an earlier periodical begun in 1814 by his brother Henry.

Its first number announced: "The *Christian Disciple* being in some numbers exhausted, it became convenient to adopt another title, but we do not propose any considerable deviation from the plan of the former work. We trust that the temper in which, as occasion shall require, we shall maintain our disputed sentiments will not be found deficient in gentleness and candour. We shall advocate a liberal theology but give it only its due space." Bryant wrote to Ware in 1842: "I am sorry to hear that the *Christian Examiner* is not so successful as it should be. The cause to which you ascribe it is doubtless the true one — that of its having taken the review form, which is too solemn and didactic for the public taste." From the year 1842 James Freeman Clarke had been a frequent contributor to the paper and he wrote for it constantly until it was absorbed in *Old and New*, to which journal he also contributed. "When I returned to Boston in 1856," wrote Dr. Hale, "for two or three years I had a certain responsibility in the editing and then was appointed to take charge of *Old and New*, established under the auspices of the Unitarian Association. It was a monthly magazine which we started under what I still think a well-conceived idea that if we took the acceptable form of a literary and political journal, we could carry to thousands of people intelligent discussions on the subject of religion which they would otherwise never have heard. I venture to say that we attempted to do what the *Outlook* does so well to-day."

When the *Dial* had run its too brief course, Mr. Frank Sanborn, the last of the Emersonian group, says that its readers went back to the *North American Review* and the *Christian Examiner* (satisfying as best they might their twin literary and religious impulses), till in 1847 the *Massachusetts Quarterly* was started, to die in its turn at the end of the third volume. Emerson, a year or so before he began the *Dial* and while the project was being spaciouly discussed by its abstracted progenitors, had been writing for a remarkable journal maintained single-

handed by that remarkable personality Orestes A. Brownson. He had begun the dignified *Boston Quarterly* in 1838, and his reasons for doing so were the same as Emerson's for beginning the *Dial*. The religious convictions he had possessed — and he had possessed several — no longer held him, and even the most liberal Unitarian periodical he now felt to bind him unduly.

The *Boston Quarterly Review* occupied part of the interval during which Brownson having pushed his way beyond the furthest frontier of Unitarianism had set up his habitation in No-Man's Land. Said the *Christian Examiner* in 1844: "The most remarkable occurrence in our literary world is the re-appearance of Mr. Brownson's review, with even more of his peculiar mental character impressed upon it, since now it is exclusively from his pen alone. Whatever be thought of his opinion and changes of opinion, no one can deny the earnestness and industry of his mind, his power and skill as a writer, or the courageous and almost reckless independence with which he throws his views before the public. His connection with the *Democratic Review* having been found mutually inconvenient, has been dissolved." Brownson's contract with O'Sullivan had been to print what he pleased. But his articles were often opposed to the policy of the party and cost the magazine many subscribers. In a few years he was editing a Catholic quarterly in the same dignified and earnest manner. His inquiring spirit searching freedom had made the circuit of the Theologies, and put in at last at an even tighter port than the one he set out from. And erratic though his course had been, the eyes of the pilot still looked out from the bridge with serene and just eyes. "Aside from its theology, with which of course we have no sympathy" he wrote in *Brownson's Quarterly* 1849, "the *Christian Examiner* is second to no periodical in the country; and it was in its pages that Channing, Norton, Ware, the Peabodys, Lawson, Walker, Frothingham, Dewey, Ripley, and others first became generally known to the read-

ing public and acquired their literary reputation. We have many pleasant as well as painful recollections connected with it, for we were ourselves for several years counted among its contributors." Nevertheless, even the most authoritative institution known to mankind could not entirely muzzle Brownson. Though he remained a Catholic for the rest of his life, he collided with the church on several questions. Brownson's last-revived *Review*, in 1873, was the first American periodical reprinted in England, where it had a large circulation.

In 1849 there were thirteen Catholic journals, eleven once a week, one once a month, one a quarterly — ten in the English language, two in the German, one in the French. "The people on whom these journals have to depend," wrote Brownson, "are for the most part recent emigrants from foreign countries, of limited education and means. That the Catholic press has been able to do no more need not surprise us; that they have been able to do so much and do it so well is the wonder."

But the civil and dignified tone of the Unitarians, fixed or progressive, and of Brownson when he became a Catholic spokesman, was a solitary phenomenon. It was soon after 1830 that the religious press, already sufficiently strident, began to grow more aggressively denominational and theological. Politeness had always been looked upon with suspicion by the church, and when the words in the mouth were as soft as butter it was because Satan lurked in the heart. By the close of the decade the nation was shaken with grave social and political issues, and it brought to them its fiercely polemical spirit — matched, to be sure, by the fiercely partisan spirit of the secular papers. The church by this time had moved much nearer to general social life. Internal activities like the Sunday School and the Temperance movements had thrown open its doors. Those who had looked upon the Sunday School as an innovation quite as worldly as the earlier introduction of the fiddle and then the organ into the sanctuary, had a firm basis for their

fears—it was the Sunday School movement, as we shall see, which began the undermining of denominational religion. Total abstinence was another relaxing influence, as the parishioners of Pierpont may have foreseen when they turned him out of the pulpit of the Hollis Street Society in Boston for preaching it. But as yet neither of these socialising elements had largely entered the religious papers. The Roman Catholic press had remained from policy as aloof from American affairs as the Protestant press had been from self-absorption; but now by reason of the great increase in immigration it was being brought into collision with the public-school system. In the great question of slavery which now began to rock the nation, however, almost the entire religious press stood silent until it was forced to declare itself.

The Protestant Episcopal papers had never had very much to say on the subject. In both the Methodist and Baptist denominations, the agitation culminated in the deliberate partition of the church between North and South, the Methodists in 1844 and the Baptists in 1845. Yet with the exception of *Zion's Herald*, Methodist papers of the North condemned abolitionism; and the slave-holding Methodists of course supported slavery as a divine institution. Not until 1842 did the *Christian Advocate* admit an editorial upon it. "The *Christian Advocate and Journal*," said the *Zion's Watchman*, established 1836, "has from time to time during two years past indiscriminately applied to the Abolitionists uncourteous and unchristian names. It has given an incorrect and mischievous view of their sentiments, by denouncing them in severe and censorious language, and refused them the privilege of explaining their views when they believed themselves misunderstood or defending themselves against the unjust charges which they believed that paper had published against them." The *Zion's Herald*, another Methodist paper, early opened its columns to free discussion of slavery but refused to take a stand. The

theological professors at Andover agreed with the Southern ministry that slavery had divine sanction, and signed a proclamation saying so. The large body of the clergy of all denominations refused to countenance the Abolitionists, and the American Tract Society cut out all condemnation of slavery from its English reprints.

It was with the intention of providing an organ for a liberal and anti-slavery Congregationalism that the *Independent* was started in 1848 by H. C. Bowen and three others, yet one of its proprietors withdrew because in course of time it declared itself too vigorously. In 1898 the paper published a retrospect of its fifty years of life. Dr. R. S. Storrs, one of its first editors, wrote thus:

When it began, relations in all the sects externally and internally were very much strained, and at the same time was going on the even fiercer debate, perturbing and exciting beyond comparison, on Slavery. This dangerous disturbance added a new one to religious controversy, only the Episcopal Church being apathetic on the subject. The American Tract Society, vociferous on dancing and novel-reading, was utterly dumb on the subject, to its everlasting disgrace; likewise the American Sunday School Union and the American Board of Missions. The American Anti-Slavery Society had been organised fifteen years before. It was into these times of clashing forces and fermenting excitements, religious and political, that the *Independent* entered. Above all, it gave immense assistance to the often buffeted but ever renewed anti-slavery sentiment. But for it, I do not think that three thousand and more New England ministers would have entered their protest against the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, or even that the Republican party would have been victorious in 1860. Senators Chase, Sumner, Seward, and President Lincoln were frankly earnest in spontaneous acknowledgment of its great service.

Lincoln said to Theodore Cuyler at their first meeting, "I keep up with you in the *Independent*." Well might he do so, for amid so much sycophancy and truckling the paper had made good its title. This in itself marked a new epoch. "How well I remember the first number!" says Edward Everett Hale. "At last we youngsters knew that we had a journal the editors of which were not ashamed to say they were independents. They

did not mean to have the general drift of the paper dictated to them. Even John Cotton and John Winthrop were afraid of the word 'independent,' and all the other lights of the new-born Congregationalism." Though it was started as a Congregational paper, its announcement created consternation in many a Congregational pulpit. It did not intend to squabble about internal controversies but to insist upon a fearless application of Puritan doctrines to social problems, especially slavery. At once it became a social and political force. When Greeley was editor of the *Tribune*, he wrote for the *Independent* at twenty-five dollars an article. "Beecher's leaders have never been surpassed in American journalism," thinks Dr. Abbott. "Only the *Tribune* and the *Evening Post* exerted so powerful an influence in creating and guiding public opinion during the decade before the war. When Beecher took control in December, 1861, he said that he would assume the liberty of meddling with every question which agitated the civil or Christian community, and his efforts would be, as heretofore, to promote vital godliness rather than sectarianism."

In the first ten years of its existence it lost eighty thousand dollars, wrote Dr. William Hayes Ward, who came to be one of its editors nearly twenty years later. At the outbreak of the war, it was compelled to suspend. When it resumed, it relinquished its thirteen year old policy of three editors for the sole editorship of Henry Ward Beecher, who for three years had been publishing his sermons there. Under Beecher it ceased entirely to champion Congregationalism and became undenominational. As Beecher did not care to give much of his time to editorial work, and indeed was temperamentally unfitted for routine of that sort, he made Theodore Tilton his assistant editor; and in 1864 Tilton officially took the position he had actually filled since coming into the office. In 1866, says Dr. Abbott, the publication of the weekly Beecher sermon was suspended without explanation or notice; and Beecher was deluged with protests



from subscribers who assumed that he had withdrawn his sermons from the paper because it had criticised him. In a short while he gave notice to Mr. Bowen that he wished to sever his connection with the paper. "I entered just after the brilliant but erratic rule of Mr. Tilton," resumes Dr. Ward. "Tilton, like Beecher, wrote little except his article. Differences of policy as to religious faith dictated Tilton's retirement." Dr. Abbott says that his utterances on religious questions had been increasingly distasteful to the orthodox churches and he was thought to promote social heresies as well, and at last Mr. Bowen dismissed him. The proprietor and publisher then assumed editorial control himself, having been kept on the anxious seat long enough by reason of the theological eccentricities of his staff. He made Dr. Edward Eggleston his superintending editor for two years, and then Dr. Ward took his place. Like most anti-slaveryites, after the war it looked around for a new cause and selected woman's suffrage. Up to 1873, says Ward, it had been the largest blanket sheet in the country, and when it wanted more space it cut down the size of its pages and increased their number. Towards the end of the century it repeated this process. In the late sixties it had greatly extended its circulation by a liberal premium system — dictionaries, steel engravings, sewing machines — a method of the day, now almost forgotten.

But to return to Dr. Storr's reminiscences.

The process of starting a newspaper then was about as simple as pitching a summer tent. No vast capital and prolonged preparation were needed. It was a time of vehement discussion on questions engaging public attention, most of which have now ceased to be exciting. The controversy between Old School and New School Presbyterians was as severe as if the union which took place in 1869 were impossible. Among Congregationalists, doctrinal discussion was incessant, and by no means always intelligent or high-toned. Religious controversy is never apt to be conciliatory, and it was then as sharp and spiteful as I have ever known it. In the Episcopal Communion, the contest between High and Low was as violent as anywhere else,

and the two parties spoke of each other more contemptuously than they commonly did of others outside of their communion. The fullest liberty of utterance was guaranteed the editors of the new *Independent* by the backers. It had no particular programme other than to be a voice for righteousness as it should be discerned, but it sympathised with the characteristic theology of New England and yet was solicitous to make its churches more attractive. So far as I know the only point of positive disagreement among the editors was on the spelling of the word "centre." We expected attacks as a matter of course. They came in abundance from the pronounced old-school papers, the *Puritan* of Boston, and a monthly called the *Observatory*; and also from the pro-slavery papers; and from representatives of religious and philanthropic societies whose financial or other reports we had now and then sharply to criticise. Attacks came from many other quarters and from those we had counted as probable friends. I have no doubt we often retorted with inconsiderate speech in a tone sadly wanting in the lovely grace of Christian meekness. But we kept our heads and it came gradually to be recognised that the paper could not be beaten down or sneered down. Meanwhile we had a large number of active friends. Some things now generally accepted were, I think, aided by the paper; and it contributed importantly to securing to fresh thinkers, within the distinct evangelical lines, liberty in thought and expression. The tone of the paper contributed to eliminate inert and noxious elements from the general religious journalism of the day. It was not perfunctory and it was free from cant.

On one point Dr. Storr feels many regrets — that they did not minister more constantly to the spiritual life of their readers. "The necessary treatment of great semi-secular themes and the controversial attitude into which we were forced prevented us. There was more ground than there ought to have been in the caustic criticism of an adversary that the *Independent* was a strong paper and might in time become a useful one if it should ever get religion." The secularity of the *Independent* was naturally the subject of much bitter attack on the part of religious papers which devoted their articles exclusively to theological and religious matters. And the innovation was looked upon with disapproval by many secular papers which, possibly not entirely without a fear of the formidable rivalry which such a paper might exert,

deprecated that an intentionally religious journal should afford so much week-day reading. To the *Nation* it seemed that the *Independent* was unduly controversial also. Godkin wrote to it in 1868: "We have endeavoured and successfully endeavoured, in the interest of reason as well as of decency, to make discussion *impersonal*. If I were to make your birth or education a means of exciting either a prejudice against you personally or of weakening the effect of your arguments, I should consider myself a very base and malignant person. It seems to me that you should be amongst the last to encourage a tendency which is the curse of the press in this country." The *Round Table*, too, kept referring to another manifestation of worldly spirit on the part of the *Independent*, in which it deemed that in common with all the children of light this journal showed itself cannier than the children frankly of this world.

We have never discovered that liberal advertising does not quite as uniformly secure their favourable editorial judgment of books or of inventions as that of the more worldly journals. In fact, the veritable puff abounds much more frequently in their columns than in the first class dailies. A single illustration will suffice. Some years ago a book was published in this city called *Hot Corn; Life Scenes in New York*. A secular paper of this city published a most indignant and scathing article against it. Another followed, denouncing it as a vicious and obscene book. The publisher got out an immense advertisement embodying unqualified commendation from some ten or twelve of our religious journals. Some of the same religious papers which had praised it then made public recantation. Perhaps this was an uncommonly flagrant case. But in nearly every issue of our religious contemporaries may be found unduly indulgent criticism favouring the interests of advertisers.

The standards of the *Round Table* were unquestionably almost impossibly idealistic. It was imbued with all the elegant New England tradition of letters and of the exclusive function of high-class journalism. Many clergymen habitually contributed to the *Round Table*, and it was possibly owing to their influence working in connection

with its own ideals that the paper was continuous in its condemnation of the secularity of the *Independent*. "Both the *Observer* and the *Independent*," it said, "exhibit a shameless perversion of religious journalism, and the secular and avaricious schemes of the latter are particularly unblushing. Thirty-two flaring columns of advertisements, sixteen columns of articles and items on everything from politics to sewing machines, yet it answers an inquiry from a subscriber as to what constitutes a religious paper by referring to itself as an example. Whole columns of filthy advertisements, overflowing with puffs and politics, war-news and business, the Cherokee Remedy, Constitution Water, and a clergyman's puff of Bronchial Trochees! We protest against this degradation and pernicious influence for personal profit." The issue of June 30, 1864, had, for instance — out of the whole number of forty-eight columns — twenty-six columns of advertisements, eleven columns of war, politics, finance, one column of market reports, two columns of religious news, five columns of Mr. Beecher's sermon, three columns of religious articles; and there were no religious editorials. "Putting the most secular of papers!" cried the scandalised *Round Table*, "into the hands of Sabbath readers under the guise of religion."

Happily, there is no longer any such thing as Sabbath reading. But in the days when discussion waxed high over this vital subject, thinkers on both sides revealed curious inconsistencies. The Sunday edition of the newspaper, we are told, came during the Civil War in response to the demand of people not be left one day in the week without news at a time when important happenings, being no respecter of man's sanctities, were just as liable to occur on Sunday as any other day. The *Round Table* in spite of its advanced notions on many topics, entertained ideas just as illogical as any when it took its broad stand on the fundamental verities of the question. On December 23, 1865, it had the following editorial on the innovation — in a city where up to 1830

churches even had the privilege of hanging chains across the street to stop all Sunday travel.

The publisher of the *Philadelphia Press* has recently issued a Sunday edition and announces his intention of keeping it up as long as it will pay. This course has evoked much local comment and even a formal remonstrance from the Methodist clergy. We have a few words to say to both parties. The arguments frequently urged in favour of Sunday issues are not arguments at all. The whole question resolves itself to this: is it morally right? To our minds there is neither right nor reason in it, but the responsibility rests with the public. But were religious papers what they should be, the Sunday issues would be less frequent than they are now. As a class they are unpardonably stupid. The secular newspaper that would be managed as slovenly, as poorly, as unattractively, would die in less than a week. There is little difference between a Sunday issue and a religious weekly except that the latter is more uninteresting. The *Independent* is not so stupid as the *Observer*, but a religious article in its columns is an accident.

How long ago it seems since the running of street cars on the Sabbath was violently protested by many clergymen who had come to their pulpits in their own carriages! Doubtless we ourselves, advanced thinkers as we are, would be quite unaware of some equally laughable inconsistency, were we not told them by radicals who dwell now beyond the frontier of public sanction. Dr. Bushnell's nice discriminations as to the exact moment in the study of law or medicine when a woman unsexed herself were as hotly derided by the suffragists who bounded him on the north as by the orthodox theologians who bounded him on the south. And while Dr. Bushnell was saying that a certain religious paper was not only behind the times but behind all times, he was being threatened with trial for heresy by the *New York Evangelist* and by the *Princeton Review*, which was busily proclaiming that the theory of evolution must not be permitted to creep into intellectual thought because it meant atheism. The recurring painful effort to adjust new ideas to old beliefs, however untenable the conclusions to which straining thinkers may be reduced, commands respect.

Dr. Hodges' struggles to get around the doctrine of evolution are far more worthy of admiration than his attacks upon Dr. Bushnell; Dr. Bushnell's struggles to blind himself to his own conclusions in his *Reform Against Nature* have a quality of bigness about them when one considers how large the authority of St. Paul bulked in all Christian minds; and humour is mixed with admiration at his independence in declaring that women have a right to make advances toward marriage and to make their own living, but though they may study law they may not speak in court and though they may practise medicine nature itself forbids them to practise surgery. Much in the attitude of the religious papers in America, however, merits the indignation and contempt inspired by a British religious weekly, when it announced that the accident which occurred at the launching of the *Great Eastern* was a direct manifestation of divine wrath on account of the change of the name of the ship to *Leviathan*, "which with all deep theologians is a scriptural synonym for the Devil." One expects difficulty in the eternal human quandary of decanting new ferments into old bottles; but the attempt, not yet abandoned, to justify the ways of God to man is as blasphemous as it is puerile. The rancour of religious zeal has always been a conspicuous and interesting phenomenon. Holmes told Motley that for three years he had suffered revilings from the evangelical press because he had opinions of his own. It detected atheism in Dr. Holland and libertinism in Stedman; and Stedman wrote Holmes in 1890: "I find myself reflecting on the change of moral temperature 'in these parts' since the Guardian Angel made all the clerical cats arch their backs and spread their fur." Lowell, when editor of the *Atlantic* wrote to Higginson about a proposed change in the latter's copy. "I like your article (Ought Women to learn the Alphabet) so much that it is already in press as leader for the next number. You misunderstand me. I want no change except the insertion of a qualifying 'perhaps,' where you speak

of the natural equality of the sexes; and that as much on your own account as mine — because I think it is not yet *demonstrated*. Even in this, if you prefer it, leave it your own way. I only look upon my duty as a vicarious one for Phillips and Sampson, that nothing may go in (before we are firm on our feet) that helps the ‘religious’ press in their warfare on us. Presently we shall be even with them, and have a free magazine in its true sense.”

When Lowell thought of the truckling tactics of the majority of the religious papers on the question of slavery and the decidedly dubious business dealings of many religious organisations of the period, and compared it with his own behaviour, he might well have been pardoned a disdainful smile. While they were polling their subscribers up to the last minute before venturing to declare themselves, he had, without a backward look, greatly curtailed his market in coming out against Slavery. Nor could Lowell be called in any sense of the word a war-horse abolitionist to whom nothing else mattered. He had written to Briggs on the *Broadway Journal* in 1845: “I do not wish to see the Journal a partisan. I think it would do more good by always speaking of certain reforms and the vileness of certain portions of our present civilisation as matters of course than by attacking them fiercely and individually. I assure you that (minister’s son and conservative’s son as I am) I do not occupy my present position without pain.”

When three years after he left the *Independent*, Beecher became editor of the *Christian Union*, he signalled his advent by an unheard of dictation, says Dr. Abbott. He demanded that a paper which preached religion should practise it. “He shut down once and for all,” says John Howard, his publisher, “upon a large class of profitable business, in excluding medical advertisements and in ordering a strict censorship upon whatever might offend the taste or impose upon the credulity of readers.” “Those who remember the class of adver-

tising on which religious journals of that period, with few exceptions, largely depended, will perhaps realise what so radical an action involved in this starting of a new journal," continues Dr. Abbott. It is not apparent whether Beecher had attempted the same stand with his former publisher Bowen, but if he had, he failed. The *Round Table* kept on attacking the *Independent* for the nature of its advertising. "The vilest of the vile advertisements, which we know secular papers to have refused over and over again, defile its pages. Here the young woman can learn how to ward off the troubles of misconduct, and the young man how to counteract the effects of dissipation. And this almost side by side with Mr. Beechers' sermons!" Religious periodicals had seemingly gone on the working theory that it was better to have a temple disfigured with money-changers than no temple at all. The point is, on the whole, hardly disputable, but it certainly calls for constant discretion in drawing the line. The religious periodicals were for a long time one of the last stands of the objectionable advertiser. When the *Round Table* resumed publication in 1865, it resumed also its war against indecent advertising, and said very frankly that the religious weeklies had largely cleared themselves of this stain. But since its discontinuance it had been amazed to see that the taint of indecent advertising had now begun to appear in the most moral dailies, claiming to be respectable and edited by respectable men. On the front page of both *Times* and *Tribune* were as disreputable advertisements as had ever entered decent homes. Consequently, in 1869 when Beecher became editor of the *Christian Union*, the weekly was doing only what secular papers of the first class were doing, and must have been more sure of the justification of its position than the *Independent* of some years before—if the accusation of the *Round Table* is correct, that it was admitting advertisements which would not be published in the best secular sheets. Yet Beecher accomplished with Howard what was not



accomplished with Bowen, and that when the paper was just struggling into existence.

"Dr. Bowen," wrote Theodore Cuyler, "was a man who never yielded in any matter that he undertook, great or small." But if Mr. G. P. Rowell is to be believed, a story he relates in *Fifty Years an Advertising Agent*, shows that this doughty warrior came a cropper at last. The *Independent* from its early days, says Mr. Rowell, carried more advertising and at a higher price than all the other religious papers of New York. It was in 1869 that Mr. Rowell started the first Directory, the indispensability of which and its stimulus to advertisers were almost immediately recognised. "Publishers of high character owning papers of high character that appeal to an exclusive constituency are given to being super-sensitive on the subject of circulation. The only time I can recollect having a circulation report from Mr. H. C. Bowen, long owner and publisher of that superlatively excellent and exceptionally successful religious paper, the *Independent*, he sent a man to me with a piece of white paper about half as large as a postal card upon which was written in pencil the figures 67,000; and the man said that Mr. Bowen said that that was the circulation of his paper and that he sent it to me in reply to my application for a statement upon which a circulation rating might be based. It is quite possible I ought to have accepted the pencil slip with confidence; but if I had, I feel certain the reputation of the Directory would fall something short of that it has to-day. In after years, Mr. Bowen once sent for me and expressed an ardent desire to be freed from the annoyance of being called upon annually for a circulation statement, and wished to learn if there did not exist some method whereby he might escape an affliction that had become distasteful to him to a degree he could hardly express."

The religious papers about 1860, says Mr. Rowell, were of vastly more importance than they are now. The prominent New York ones were the *Observer*, *Evangelist*,

*Examiner*, *Christian Advocate*, and *Independent*; in Boston there were *Zion's Herald*, *Watchman and Reflector*, *Congregationalist*. To these papers the *Round Table* paid its respects in 1864. From them it may be gathered that the *Round Table*, at least, thought that the vitality of the religious press depended upon controversy.

Not many years ago the House of Bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church issued a pastoral letter specially rebuking the contentious and mischievous spirit of the religious press of their church. The General Association of Connecticut made up of Congregational ministers at one of its annual sessions unanimously passed censure upon the too-common asperity of religious newspapers, especially in the matter of a controversy. Most of the religious journals of all denominations had truly exposed themselves to such reproofs. Their addictions to controversy and the bad spirit with which they conducted it became a positive scandal to the Christian name. Their general influence instead of being what it ought to have been, particularly liberalising, elevating and refining, was particularly narrowing, embittering and vulgarising. The religious press no longer exhibits that fondness for strife, but strange to say, this relinquishment of controversy has debilitated them most pitifully. No discerning man who looks upon them can fail to be struck at their want of both moral and intellectual force. Here and there is an exception, but weakness is now the prime characteristic of our religious journals in both city and country. Their positive faults it would be still easier to indicate. They are generally of the same kind as attach to the secular press, nor do they vary very much in degree—they puff their patrons and admit questionable advertisements.

Yet the decrease in the acrimonious tone of controversy which the *Round Table* noted was only relative. Religious discords reached their climax between the years 1840 and 1860, it is true, but it continued long after that, and finally was to wane not so much on account of an inward change of heart (in spite of prominent leaders who pled for it) as from outward conditions. There was enough left in 1872 to sadden the *Christian Union* with what appeared to it to be the striking characteristic of church papers. "As we look over the huge pile of religious exchanges in our office, we are struck with

some general facts as to the spirit of various church bodies. To one who is sincerely looking in every quarter for some ground of sympathy their perpetual war-whoop is discouraging. The Roman Catholics deal out to all their fellow Christians red-hot shot, vitriol and cayenne pepper. The many newspapers of the great Methodist Church, though they express for the most part only friendship for other Christian bodies, are always throwing a stone at Rome. The Episcopalians recognise as little kinship with the other sects as do the Catholics, and assume axiomatic principles unacceptable and unfamiliar to the religious community at large."

But two years old was the *Christian Union* at the time of this editorial. It was in January, 1870, that Beecher took the editorship of an impecunious weekly called the *Church Union*. This was begun under the policy which its name signified — of securing the organic unity of all Protestant Evangelical churches. Beecher said that he insisted on the change of name because he wanted to be as free from sectarian bias as the Sermon on the Mount. "We distinguish between oneness of Church and oneness of Christian sympathy," he wrote in his opening announcement. "Not only shall we not labour for an external and ecclesiastical unity but we should regard it as a step backward. The *Christian Union* will devote no time to inveighing again sects, but will spare no pains to persuade Christians of every sect to treat one another with Christian charity, love and sympathy." Perhaps nothing could better illustrate the spirit of religious journalism than the attacks which the paper received for this sweet and temperate doctrine. Church papers everywhere assailed him. It was, to be sure, an entire innovation; but the suspicion entertained by conservative minds for everything novel is not sufficient to excuse their virulent opposition. However the members of church communities may have regarded Beecher's announced intention "to seek to interpret the Bible rather as a religion of life than a book of doctrine," church journals seemed to have scented

that their existence was threatened by the newcomer. If people of every creed found the *Christian Union* attractive reading, they might in time cease to consider it a duty to subscribe to the organ of their own creed. Thus, for the first time in the history of religious journalism, all the denominational journals found themselves united in a common cause against a common enemy. That their unspoken fear had a substantial basis was demonstrated before the quarter-century had ended. The decrease of denominational rivalries began in fact to undermine the denominational press. When in addition to the great success of an undenominational religious journal arose within the churches social institutions which continued the work of Beecher in emphasising a common religious sentiment rather than a difference of doctrine, the decline of the denominational press became more rapid. The Young Men's Christian Association, the Christian Endeavour, and the Sunday School Convention greatly widened the influence which Beecher had begun. The denominational journals had been right in their fear that if people began to slacken their church ties by taking in an undenominational religious paper, they might end in regarding the church more as a social than a religious institution.

But to return to the *Christian Union*, which teaching Christian love found itself the universal object of Christian hatred. Dr. Lyman Abbott has paid a glorious tribute to it in his life of its editor:

In a discussion which arose over the addition of a Farm and Garden Department, he said: "It is the aim of the *Christian Union* to gospelise all the industrial functions of life." Never in the five years in which we were associated do I recall a single instance in which he manifested an acerb or irritated spirit, a desire to hit back, a wish to get even with an antagonist, or even an ambition for a victory over him. He would not allow the journal to be used in his own personal defence. I think now, as I thought then, that he carried this principle too far. The journal suffered from the silence he imposed upon it during the time in which he was subjected to vituperation and abuse. The phenomenal success into which the *Christian Union*

leaped from its birth, was due to him; and due also to the support of his associate, George Merriam, and the energy and sagacity of the publishers."

In 1881 he sold his interest and retired. He had come to feel, says Dr. Abbott, that his name must be removed as editor since he furnished almost nothing to the paper. When it changed its name for the second time, it gave us a retrospect. "In 1869 a feeble journal bearing the name of *Church Union* was maintaining a struggling existence. Now a quarter of a century later, denominations still exist but denominational sermons are increasingly rare. Polemical theory is banished from the pulpit, where it once reigned supreme, to the ecclesiastical court room. The name *Christian Union* has identified the paper with the religious press, and as this is with a few exceptions denominational, even its other religious contemporaries fell into the error of imagining it to be the organ of a denomination. There are in the country more than one hundred weekly journals which bear the title 'Christian.' These considerations and the practical results of these circumstances have compelled for some years the consideration of a change of name. The title of this department, which has always occupied the first and most prominent place in the paper and which in some sense characterises the attitude of the paper, naturally suggested an alternative." The sub-title of the *Christian Union* had been "Undenominational, Evangelical, Protestant, Christian": the *Outlook* announced itself as a weekly Family newspaper, a running history of the year. The department of the Religious World, it said, would be but a feature, and its main attempt would be but to trace and record the religious activities of the times, though it would print a weekly sermon and weekly comments on the Sunday School Lesson.

But even before the *Independent* had let down the bars to the worldliness which is symbolised finally by a religious paper's classification of itself as merely a Family newspaper, the religious press even of the more rigidly

denominational type, had sedulously been offering literary fare which tended to decrease any sharp distinction between sectarian and secular journalism. One is struck by the abundant mention in letters and lives of our literary men of their connection with the religious press and how greatly it contributed, though in small doles, to the support of literature at a time when bread was scarce. Many of the religious weeklies had their New York and Washington correspondents. Gail Hamilton wrote in 1860 of the *Congregationalist* to which she had been sending Washington letters for two years: "They will give me a salary of \$400 to \$600 a year for work which will take only about a day or a day and a half a week." In answer to one of her first literary ventures, the *Independent* had written: "You shall be paid at the rate of \$3 a column — when we know who you are. For, my dear Mrs. Gail or Girl, we don't pay nobody's, we don't. If you will let me into the secret of your name, I will be very whist about it and send your money promptly." In 1860 Mrs. Kinney wrote from Florence to her son, Stedman, "The *Independent* has offered Mrs. Browning a hundred dollars for any original scrap of her poetry;" and Stedman notes in 1869 that Bowen paid him one hundred dollars for "some trash called The House That Vanderbilt" and had asked him to write twelve more poems at the same price. In the late '60's the *Independent* made Justin McCarthy its literary editor while he was in this country; and the rising fame of Sidney Lanier owed much to this paper's fostering. In 1888 Maurice Thompson became its literary editor. When the *Christian Union* started, Mrs. Stowe was naturally very desirous for the success of her brother's venture and pledged her literary support. "I see," she wrote Mr. Howard, "you have advertised a serial story from me as one of the attractions of the year to come, and I ought therefore to be thinking what to write. A story ought to grow out of one's heart like a flower, not to be meas-

ured off by the yard. To have eyes fixed on me and people all waiting!" Later she wrote him: "I am very much gratified with the success of My Wife and I. I get a great many more letters about it than I received about anything except Uncle Tom. When you advertise again, there is no harm in saying how many you have sold. I like people to know it for many reasons." In 1877 Gail Hamilton wrote briskly to the managing editor of the *Alliance*: "The only reason I cannot form an alliance offensive and defensive with you, is because you are poor, and I am a saint and a martyr to the one fixed principle, never to write except for the highest price. I know nothing of your finances except what may be inferred from the nature of things, but a religious and radical and new newspaper, it stands to reason cannot be rich. When your ship comes home from sea, oh, whistle and I'm come to you, my lad! But so long as you cultivate literature on a little oatmeal, bless you my children, bless you, but leave me my fatted calf!" Lest Gail be thought too mercenary, let it be added quickly that she was earning her own living and that of others by her pen, and as she wrote all her letters "between hunting for the soap and the scissors, and treated every principle of politics while going from the baker at the end gate to the plumber at the back door," time for scribbling was limited; and too many religious weeklies were like the paper of which she puts down this note in 1881: "Wanted me to write Thoughts On Mother's Death, or Mother's Grave, or Mother's House in Heaven, for a book; should receive a copy of book in payment!" And lest the *Alliance* itself be sympathised with for its poverty, let it be added that it sneered at Stedman as one who had voluntarily tried to unite the services of God and Mammon—because, unable to support himself by poetry and refusing to become a newspaper drudge, he had gone into Wall Street. Yet the "broker-poet" had refused to write

eleven more poems at one hundred dollars each like the House That Vanderbilt, for the *Independent* — he said he could not afford to write such trash.

Thus the religious press itself in its literary department had contributed to breaking down the bulwark between sacred and secular reading which seems to have chiefly kept it from the flood that finally swept away its authority and prestige. The New York *Observer* at one time frankly divided itself into two sections, for Sunday and for week-day perusal. One of the earliest religious weeklies went further, and asked its subscribers not to read it on Sunday at all. But as such nice distinctions ceased to be insisted upon and the religious press dallied more and more with the affairs of the world, a similar tendency began to be exhibited by the secular press. Just as the one was extending the week-day into Sunday, the other was coming to extend Sunday into the week-day. Far more matters once considered distinctively religious began to appear in the newspapers — discussions of church affairs and religious events — until nowadays dailies thought by some anxious conservatives to be other-worldly in an opposite sense from the ancient religious organs, publish sermons and have editorial departments conducted by clergymen. The encroachment of the newspaper is particularly felt, writes Rev. William Ellsworth Strong, in the once very successful missionary periodical. "In the beginning the missionary magazine reflected as nowhere else the romance of far-off lands and the life of strange peoples; to-day it competes with the Associated Press and the kodak of every traveller. Missionary news and scenes now make good copy for daily and weekly, just as popular monthlies and scientific reviews often include more strictly religious articles."

Mr. Hamilton Mabie says that there was once a Boston religious weekly so eager to keep up with the times that it changed its name from the *Fireside Companion* to the *Christian Register*. But the case (if it ever existed, since as early as 1821 — before furnaces came in — the



*Register* was turned on) was by no means representative. Religious papers have been noticeably not only behind the times of the rest of the world but behind their own times. This constant phenomenon, Dr. W. H. Ward noted in 1891 in *The Religious Paper and the Ministry*. The editor being generally a minister, he says, is likely to edit for ministers rather than for laymen. "The serious danger is his setting up as dictator. Generally, too, it is edited by rather old men who are in serious danger of being behind the thinking of their age. The religious papers were almost unanimously against tolerance even up to the time when the ministry was ready to decide in favour of liberty of views and of teaching. Lay representatives among the Methodists could not find expression in the Methodist papers and had to establish new papers through which it could speak, just as fifty years before New School Presbyterianism had to create a new press for itself. Now the Presbyterian papers are far behind the seminaries and the ministry in accepting the general results of the Higher Criticism."

For these reasons internal and external, then, the significance of the religious press in America has greatly diminished. Within came the gradual cessation, through the development of social institutions in common, of the vigour that unhappily enough seems to have been dependent upon sectarian strife; but this latter manifestation of progress was accompanied by a dogged determination to be the last to throw the old forms aside. To this must be added the tendency to develop specialised magazines of theology by the various schools, says Dr. Ward; these have to a great extent absorbed the determinedly denominational reader. Many more of these exist now than when the religious weekly was so formidable a rival. With the decline of the religious weekly came the growth of the religious magazine which, however, makes little bid for general support and is more and more endowed. Mr. Bryce could no longer write in his *American Commonwealth* as in 1888 that the religious weekly

remained a force of immense influence in the life of the nation and was quite unparalleled in Europe. Instead, he would note the fact that the two most famous weeklies, the *Independent* and the *Outlook*, have quite subordinated their religious features in order to survive; and that many others which once had authority and prosperity, having still retained their religious departments as their chief feature, seem moribund.

In 1897 the advertising agency of George Batten and Company announced to its advertisers the eight representative religious papers of the United States to be the *Christian Advocate* (Methodist), the *Churchman* (Protestant Episcopal), the *Congregationalist*, the *Evangelist* (Presbyterian), the *Examiner* (Baptist), the *Independent* (Undenominational), the *New York Observer*, (Presbyterian), the *Outlook* (Undenominational). All of these papers have been long-lived though some have seen many vicissitudes. With the exception of the *Outlook* and the *Independent* and the *Churchman* they date around the first quarter-century mark. Besides these, there were 1,187 religious papers, of which 569 are weeklies, 6 semi-weeklies, 1 thrice a month, and 2 dailies. Of the magazine type there were 438 monthlies, 71 semi-monthlies, and 8 bi-monthlies, and 91 quarterlies, chiefly Sunday School publications. Thus apparently, though the authority and prestige of the palmy days of religious journalism have departed, never to return since the cessation of distinctively Sunday reading and the encroachment upon its domain of secular journals, there was plenty of life left at the end of the century even if its manifestation had ceased to be of national importance.

## CHAPTER XII

### CENTURY BORN SCRIBNER'S

NEW YORK had no sooner knocked into a cocked hat the Philadelphia brag of the greatest circulation than another heady project for silencing her ancient rival occurred to her. The war, which threatened the security even of *Harper's*, kept it in cold storage for a decade, but age did not wither it. Philadelphia had been able to keep going at once several magazines of the same rank; the metropolis could never demonstrate her literary supremacy until she did the same. The jeers of her sisters were at last beginning to penetrate. New York — they said loftily, hugging their Hobson's choice — may publish literature but she does not read it; better a dinner of herbs where love is than a stalled ox which is eaten only by your neighbours. The only appropriate retort was not for the moment forthcoming and must be relegated to the misty future. But in the meantime why not demolish Philadelphia's sole remaining brag?

New York's one great magazine still left some conspicuous fields of activity untouched. Family circles had been known to take in more than one magazine even in the old days when magazines were all about the same. Perhaps there might be room, even at some of the fire-sides pre-empted by *Harper's*, for a periodical with different aims — more national certainly, and perhaps less preoccupied with finding a common denominator. So thought Charles Scribner, head of a New York publishing house, and so thought the man who became his editor. In two items, they agreed, lay their best chance — finer illustrations and native writers. For the rest they would feel their way. And *Scribner's* was brought forth.

The feature of illustrations, ran the editorial announcement in the first number, has been adopted to meet a thoroughly pronounced popular demand. In the last number before it became the *Century* there was another editorial announcement. "Its superb engravings and the era it introduced of improved illustrative art, have been the chief factor in its success. This feature is attributable to Mr. R. W. Gilder and Mr. A. W. Drake. The effects achieved excited great curiosity both in this country and in England. Mr. Smith may legitimately claim to have revolutionised the cut-printing of the world. It took a lawyer turned business man to discover that damp paper is not the best for printing cuts on." In those eleven years they had heard the intellectual protest against "picture-books" grow small by degrees and beautifully less, until save for a few stalwart souls it had ceased altogether to spell that fatty degeneration of culture once so profoundly feared by those who grudged that others should be carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease. One might almost forget that such ideas were ever entertained by sensible people did we not in our own day behold austere persons raise the same objection to their children acquiring knowledge easily (and more lastingly) by means of the "movies." The revolution which *Scribner's* effected, like every other successful one, owed much to its coming at the right moment.

It was the good fortune of the magazine to be born with the rise of a new school of American art, and it has probably never happened to any periodical to hold a relation so intimate with the arts of design or to be a means of diffusing correct judgments and principles. When it was founded eleven years ago, the art of wood-engraving was almost stationary. The illustrated periodicals were hardly better than they had been for twenty years. A dozen years ago, one of the leading engravers declared there was not an illustrator on wood in New York who could draw the human figure correctly. It was manifestly impossible to make a really great illustrated magazine under such conditions. *Scribner's*, therefore, had recourse to a method already in use for certain purposes—that of photographing on wood. This was not then considered the correct way to obtain

an artistic picture. By degrees, the change was wrought, and the individuality of painter and designer retained. Protests were many — the pictures were positively ugly, it was alleged; but by degrees people came to prefer their real beauty to the old conventional properness. Never before by means of any art or device had the excellence of a great picture been carried by multiplied copies. In a country like ours, where galleries are few and worthy paintings rarely to be seen out of the great cities, the educational service of such art-work as *Scribner's* is incalculable. The London *Standard* said of the Portfolio of Proof Impressions from Scribner's: "It is impossible for an Englishman to look through this collection of engravings without a deep feeling of humiliation. The wood-engraving stands now at the head of all methods of reproduction. A dozen years ago steel prints were thought to be the chief means. To have attained this is to work an ultimate revolution in the world's art-culture."

In June, 1881, Dr. Holland wrote a retrospect for his magazine just undergoing its second baptism. Mr. Charles Scribner had applied to him thirteen years before to take the editorship of *Hours at Home*, a periodical the publisher had started some years earlier. Holland, however, believed it to be moribund. Happening sometime later to meet Mr. Roswell Smith in Europe, he spoke of the offer and said he would be glad of the opportunity to undertake a new one of his own. Mr. Smith, who appears never to have considered the subject before, replied that he would like to manage the business end of such an enterprise. Together the two went to Scribner and unfolded the project, and they found him favourably inclined.

Naturally it was his wish to have the new magazine emanate from his book-house. I refused, however, to have anything to do with a magazine that should be floated as the flag of a book-house, or as a tributary or subordinate to a book-house. It was agreed that a new concern should be formed. Mr. Smith had no knowledge whatever of the publishing business, and I had none save that which I had acquired in the publication of a country newspaper, with the details of which, however, I had little to do. It was deemed desirable by Mr. Scribner that the magazine should bear the name of the book-house. I was glad to have the prestige of the name, he was glad to have the adver-

tising which the new magazine would thus give. But in another respect it was not a selfish matter at all. Through long years of the most brotherly intercourse I had come into very affectionate relations with Mr. Scribner. But we—the two parties—regarded the enterprise and operations of the magazine house from radically different standpoints. We, the majority interest, had no interest whatever in the book-house; we were organised to do our own business and neither to do nor to mind any other man's. We felt that if we should desire to publish a book, we ought not to be called upon to consider whether we were affecting the business of any other concern whatsoever. This difference was the inspiring cause of all the recent changes that have taken place in the proprietorship of the concern.

If Charles Scribner relinquished his pet project, to have a magazine of his own in the same way that the Harper firm had one of its own, it was because he was confident that Dr. Holland was worth the price he unaccountably exacted. Scribner knew more than anybody else but Bowles of the *Springfield Republican* how much Holland was worth to him as an editor. Holland had gone on Bowles' paper as assistant in 1847 for a salary of \$480, which was increased the next year to \$700. The Letters he wrote for the paper were so popular that the subscription responded at once. But in spite of their history and of a didactic home-spun quality as dear to the heart as to the head of the American publisher of the period, Holland was unable to find a publisher until Scribner consented to hear them. Their success at once showed Scribner that their author had gauged rightly the widest audience in the country—the practical intelligent people who wanted to better themselves. The *New York Evening Post* said at his death that no literary man in America was so accurately fitted for the precise work of developing a great popular magazine. He had the immense advantage of keeping on a plane of thought just above that of a vast multitude of readers, each one of whom he could touch with his hand and raise a little upward. "No other man in this country," said Robert Collyer, "could have built up *Scribner's* as he did, making it fill a place uniquely adapted to the great mass of

the American people." This was his ideal — to speak to the heart and mind of the average man. His proudest title was "The Great Apostle to the Multitude of Intelligent Americans who have Missed a College Education." To them he preached constantly, and in the most neighbourly of fashions. One of his great texts was temperance, but he had no intention of remaining the stock moralist which so long contented his more prudent rival, *Harper's*. Not only did he criticise severely the political and social abuses of his time — still a preposterous rashness for a popular magazine; but, bolder still, he did not care how many sects squinted at his theology. That we fail to extract any heretical doctrines from the wholesome but somewhat stodgy Bitter Sweet to-day, does not subtract from the audacity of an editor who dared to risk subscriptions by publishing the poem in a day when he knew it would poke up the pulpits. He knew how to feed the virtuous and yet give them cakes and ale also — a born editor. This Charles Scribner seems to have divined from the start, when he allowed a man to step from a subordinate position on a small city newspaper into his office and dictate the terms on which he would assume control of an old publisher's new magazine. "I risked in the business," wrote Holland afterward, "all the money and all the reputation I had made, and it is a great satisfaction that I did not miscalculate the resources of my business associate or my own. Although the *Monthly* started without a subscriber it never printed or sold less than forty thousand copies a month. The highest task we set ourselves was to reach one hundred thousand, now we are looking forward to one hundred and fifty. That two men utterly unused to the business should succeed from the first in so difficult a field is, in retrospect, a surprise to themselves."

These two men, though of a progressive cast, were on account of their inexperience the more desirous to make haste slowly. A magazine, too, which had absorbed *Hours at Home* and *Putnam's* at the very outset natu-

rally owed something to its digestion. *Putnam's*, as we have seen, prided itself on possessing opinions; and the *Riverside Magazine*, which was the next candidate for assimilation, was a juvenile which prided itself on forming them. In five years another set of readers inured to catholic discussion of ideas came in a body to swell the subscription list. This flock had been shepherded by Edward Everett Hale in *Old and New*, a magazine begun under the auspices of the Unitarian Association, with an idea then quite radical even for so unorthodox a creed. "We took the ground," says he, "that literature and politics and theology and religion might be discussed within the same covers and read by the same readers. If you please to take the language of the trade, we believed that the stories and the poems in our journal could float the theology and the religion. In eleven volumes I edited the journal. At the end of that time we had more than one competitor in the same path; especially *Scribner's*. The Unitarian Association had long since tired of us; for it was impossible to make the directors of a denominational society understand that we were doing their work—as we were—better than they could do it themselves. For myself I was tired of the strain of editorial life; and *Old and New* was merged into *Scribner's*. This is the reason why Philip Nolan's *Friends* was printed in that magazine." The author of such narrative poems as *Bitter Sweet* and *Kathrina* would of course have been congenial to Unitarian readers anyway, and they would have remained unstirred by the heresies therein ventilated. It is ironic to find that Dr. Holland did not escape the common fate of reformers any more than Scribner himself kept his well-known professional morality above reproach by publishing him—for when Stedman came to publish in the magazine his series on the American Poets, Dr. Holland very strongly objected on moral grounds to including his paper on Whitman, which proved, indeed, to arouse a great deal of controversy. It has been ever thus in the history of



human thought; always reformers have dreamed themselves the only sane pioneers, and to adventure beyond their last stake is to pass the frontier of safety.

Intending to occupy a field which *Harper's* had not entered — the discussion, as well as the exposition, of ideas — still it was many years, said the *Century* as it made its début, before *Scribner's* thoroughly grasped and adopted the scheme for presenting, as the best of all magazine material, the elaborate discussion of living, practical questions. "Also we made only one attempt in the old series at popular studies, and now we know better how to manage it. There is nothing that opens before us now more attractive than this field of illustrated historical research and representation." Many years was it, also, before the magazine ventured to depart from the old custom of recapitulating each month the progress of civilisation. *Literature, Home and Society, the World's Work* were sanctioned summaries of which only the first possessed much claim to be included in a magazine that no longer sought to occupy the place of a newspaper as well. Another slow evolution from the old to the new was the gradual cessation of self-consciousness about the names of contributors. More than a decade later than the first *Putnam's* and the *Atlantic*, it had begun with printing names in the Contents. In the first number the only name permitted to appear with the text was that of George MacDonald, who was running a serial. Gradual also, although it featured and paid for American material from the outset, was its relinquishment of the English reprint. "The system of reprinting English serials, which had proven itself the deadly blight of native literature," reminisced the *Century*, "was tried for a year or two and then wholly given up. One of the things which tended to give *Scribner's* a distinctive character of its own was its discarding of English serials and its cordial encouragement of every sign of originality and force in the younger American writers."

It was the good fortune of the *Century* to come into

existence at the moment when a renaissance was preparing in American literature, said that magazine modestly in its fourth volume. But indeed, this renaissance seems more due to *Scribner's* than to any other one force. It is true that it had come in with a new era; that the war had pushed the old and narrow American life into a premature antiquity, and that many new periodicals and journals sprang out of this mental reaction. But most of them perished; and the new writers, thanks to the unfair competition with English authors, could find for their fermentation no outlet in books. It was because the pages of *Scribner's* were open to these youngsters that they lived to grow up. Especially was this true of the Southern writers, and the service of *Scribner's* in this respect and its wider service in helping the wounds of the war to heal — in accordance with the newly discovered surgical treatment by drainage — cannot be overestimated. Their War articles were not only superb journalism, but splendid patriotism also. In the chronicle of the war by the leading generals, each side will discover the true mettle of the other, the magazine ventured to hope. It was in 1873 that it sent a special train through the South with the purpose of securing a series of articles. "The discussion now going on in the *Century* about the re-organisation of society in the Southern States," they said, "is of the utmost value in putting the North in possession of the facts and the South of a temper, to which inherited views and party spirit have blinded both sides."

One of the articles in *Scribner's* stated the general situation. "A Northern business man who had published an Army and Navy Journal or something of the sort during the war, when he found his occupation gone, tried to exploit the local patriotism of the South by getting up a series of Southern text-books, with results that will not be forgotten by the investors. Magazine after magazine was started. But the new generation began to recognise it was necessary to seek a wider public.

It was not until Southern men began to write for Northern magazines that the South became a factor in the literary life of the country."

The first Northern magazine open to them was *Scribner's*, both in stories which represented their life and articles which stated their point of view. Immediately after the war there was in the South as in the North the usual ebullition of literary energy. But in the South it was much increased by the desire to present their cause aright to the world. The activity in starting new magazines as vehicles for the passionate desire for expression was proportionately even greater in the South than in the North, where, as we have seen, it was abundantly fruitful. But these magazines naturally had even greater mortality. The South had never been able to support periodicals, and now that it was impoverished it was far less able to do so. The writers, too, of such a literature as the South felt the need of to represent it aright were far less able than formerly to work for nothing, even had the magazines been able to continue, on their short rations, to afford them a medium for their patriotism. To exploit this patriotism had been their publishers' frank and commendable object. *De Bow's Review* began the last of its many series, "devoted to the restoration of the Southern States." The *Southern Review* dedicated itself "to the despised, the disfranchised, and the down-trodden people of the South." In Charlotte, Atlanta, Raleigh, Charleston, and New Orleans other magazines took up the cry — the children of the new generation must be educated in the old ideals and the North must not be allowed to misrepresent their fathers to them. The most successful of these short-lived magazines was the *Southern* of Baltimore, which lasted five years. In addition to its English reprints, it introduced several young Southerners in original work. The chief of these were Margaret Preston, Malcolm Johnston, Sidney Lanier, Paul Hamilton Hayne, Maurice Thompson, Professor Gildersleeve, and Professor Price. But

the *Southern* in spite of the best intentions could pay nothing — Malcolm Johnston, for instance, gave them his Dukesborough Tales, which afterward reached a wider audience and brought some return to the author. All of these people were shortly publishing in *Scribner's* at the regular rates. On the trip which the magazine planned in 1873 for the purpose of its articles on the New South, was discovered in New Orleans one of the story-tellers of the New South, George W. Cable; and within six months he appeared in its pages. Within half a dozen years John Esten Cooke, Thomas Nelson Page, and Joel Chandler Harris were coming to the front. Mrs. Burnett was one of *Scribner's* greatest finds. In 1881 the editor in calling attention to the fact that seven articles by Southerners had appeared in one number, said, "We are glad to recognise that there is a permanent productive force in literature in the Southern States. We welcome the new writers to the great republic of letters." So much was the *Century* a patron of the new authors that its "dialect" stories seemed to many readers decidedly overworked; and they longed for pages less hen-tracked.

The *Atlantic* and *Harper's* quickly followed *Scribner's* lead, the former exploiting Maurice Thompson and Charles Egbert Craddock and printing in series George Cary Eggleston's *A Rebel's Recollections*. *Lippincott's*, and the *Independent* made the fame of Sidney Lanier. Of this last periodical Maurice Thompson became literary editor in 1888, though Southerners had long singled it out for special condemnation on account of its bias. In 1890 Mr. Walter Hines Page of North Carolina even entered the sanctum of the New England holy of holies, the *Atlantic*.

All this change of attitude, North and South, had been brought about by *Scribner's*. It had not only opened its doors to Southern writers, but it had gone to them and invited them to come in. To the opportunity thus afforded, the disappearance of the truculent, professional,

and provincial spirit of Southern literature owes its first impetus and its gathering strength. Mr. Mims in his *Life of Lanier* gives us some interesting details of this, as well as an excellent résumé of the situation.

In the period '75-'85 the old order of Southern writers passed away. Paul Hamilton Hayne best represents the transition to the new group. This began to write, not in the attempt to create a distinctively Southern literature, but because the new literature, unlike the old, was related directly to the life of the people. Sentimentalism was superseded by a healthy realism. They were (for the first time) willing to be known as men who made their living by literature. They did not want to be sectional but national in spirit. Joel Chandler Harris said, "What does it matter whether I am Northerner or Southerner. Literature that can be labelled Northern, Southern, Western, or Eastern is not worth labelling at all. Whenever we have a genuinely Southern literature, it will be American and cosmopolitan as well." All of the new writers had little patience with the former literary methods and criticism of the South. As early as 1871 the *Southern Magazine* in a review of Southern writers had written: "We should be courageous enough to condemn bad art and bad workmanship no matter whose it be; to say, for instance, to more than half of the writers in these volumes, 'Ladies, you may be all that is good, noble, and fair; you may be the pride of society and the lights of your homes; so far as you are Southern women our hearts are at your feet—but you have neither the genius, the learning, nor the judgment to qualify you for literature.'" In 1874 Hayne condemned in the same magazine the provincial literary criticism which had prevailed. "No foreign ridicule, however richly deserved, can stop this growing evil until our own scholars and thinkers have the manliness and the honesty to discourage instead of applauding such manifestations of artistic weakness and artistic platitudes as have hitherto been foisted on us by persons uncalled and unchosen by any of the Muses."

*Scribner's* in providing Southern writers with an approved and profitable Northern vehicle created a new national attitude in both North and South; and shaped a literature it had gone far toward creating, by banishing its provinciality.

But the War articles performed a great service to more than the nation at large. They lifted the circulation of the *Century* to a high figure and they made much money

for the book publishing end of the two firms. Told by the actors themselves on both sides and illustrated with an excellence never attained before, they naturally attracted enormous attention. Those contributed by General Grant were, on account of his prominence and some special circumstances, particularly profitable. Mr. Albert Bigelow Paine gives an account of them in his *Life of Mark Twain*. Mr. Gilder told Twain, he says, that the *Century* editors had endeavoured to get Grant to contribute to their War series, but that not until his financial disaster, as a member of the firm of Grant and Ward, had he been willing to consider the matter; that Grant now welcomed the idea of contributing three papers to the series and that the promised payment of \$500 for each had gladdened his heart and relieved him of immediate anxiety. (Somewhat later, adds Paine, the *Century* Company of their own accord added liberally to this sum.) Twain went to see Grant about book publication and was told that they had made him a proposition for his completed memoirs. Grant had not thought the proposition good enough, but when Twain told the General what offer, in his person, the American Book Company of Hartford would make, he took the General's breath away. Yet Grant demurred, saying that the book ought to go, other things being equal, to the man who had first suggested it to him. Then said Twain, "I am the man, and you should place your book with my firm," and recalled to him a conversation to that effect. After much discussion the General agreed, though he felt that Twain was bankrupting himself by the royalty he offered. All this got into the papers, and Mark Twain publishing General Grant became the most talked of event in the book world. To increase the advertising the project received, certain newspapers persistently circulated rumours of estrangements between Grant and the *Century* and between Mark Twain and the *Century* as a result of the book decision. Nothing but the most cordial relations and understanding prevailed, says Mr. Paine, but all this greatly

fomented public interest in the General's *Century* papers, which in that respect were already record-breakers. And as if this were not fortunate enough, it was increased by another happening. The public knew that General Grant was dying as he wrote or dictated his story with Mark Twain hovering around to encourage him. It appeared that at one of their sittings they discovered that Mark had cleared out of camp once in Missouri just in time to escape capture by the man whose book he was now going to publish. The *Century* got wind of this extremely picturesque anecdote, and at their request Mark wrote for their War series the story of his share in the Rebellion and particularly of his war relations with General Grant.

The good fortune and fine editorial sense in all this attended the succeeding leaders of the magazine. Kennan's Siberian papers proved another enormous sensation, and won the magazine the proud distinction of being forbidden to enter Russia. The next sensation was greater still, although the public had time to moderate its transports in the four years that the articles ran. This was the History of Lincoln by his two secretaries, which had been in cold storage for twenty years awaiting Mr. Smith's sagacity. As early as 1867 Hay and Nicolay had tried to get *Harper's* interested, but neither it nor any of the book publishers would listen. "We shall have to write it and publish it on our own hook some day," said Hay. When after a score of years, the *Century* asked them to set about the work in earnest, they received the largest price any magazine had paid up to that date — fifty thousand dollars. *Harper's*, interested at last, again had to yield to her rival. During negotiations Hay wrote to Nicolay: "I do not believe Gilder will want the stuff for his magazine. It is not adapted for that; there is too much truth in it. We will not fall in with the present tone of blubbering sentiment of course." John Hay wrote another record-maker for the *Century*. The success of *The Bread-Winners* exceeded that of any previous American novel. Its anonymous au-

thor set everybody guessing. A Western Doctor of Divinity declared that he wrote it and that the publishers never paid him. But this, the customary fate of anonymous hits, is not so amusing as that the once anonymous *Atlantic* refused it because the author would not sign it.

Before taking the most important step that can happen to a maiden magazine — changing its name for better or for worse — *Scribner's* in 1881 published a pamphlet modestly relating her birth, breeding, and expectations. "In the height of prosperity she was about to assume a name of broader significance. The magazine whose ways are not the ways of the present time cannot live on its old reputation, but must stiffen and die with the infirmities of age. (Like a theatrical star, only constant contact with the public can keep her young!) There were those who predicted that she would die by the severe law of natural selection as had died *Knickerbocker* and *Putnam's*. The starting of a magazine in face of able and established competitors is always a most venturesome and difficult task. So it had been with her. It was fortunate perhaps that her conductors and editors were inexperienced in the conduct of periodicals. Lack of skill was more than made up by their freedom from bondage to old ways of doing. It did not take them long to discover that the methods and men then in vogue were not sufficient. A new magazine must find new men. It was thought necessary to make it cheap in the beginning, but before the close of the year it was found that a three dollar magazine could not afford the highest excellence, and the second year began with a most perilous change for a new periodical. It was enlarged and the price raised to four dollars, at a moment of great popular excitement and no little financial stringency. But after a temporary check it was soon again on the high road to prosperity. New methods of engravings were ventured upon in the face of a shower of adverse criticism. The steady increase in circulation of from ten to twenty per cent. a year made it possible to augment its facilities in every direction."



In short, the young woman was putting herself on record before taking a decisive step. In spite of her efforts to have it all understood, people had got the idea that she was married to a book-publishing house, and she didn't propose to stand it any longer. She was a maiden bright and free, no guile seduced, no force could violate, and she didn't propose to take unto herself a mate unless it were Father Time itself, the everlasting. And so, to the confusion of library-boys until time itself shall have an end, *Scribner's* was going to become the *Century*. For her scorned and reputed spouse, some while afterward, having caught the habit from his long quasi-relation, married a maiden of the name he had grown used to; and generations yet unborn will complain therefore of mistaken identity. The history of this noble young woman, *Scribner's* Number Two, belongs rather to the twentieth century than to the nineteenth. Having bounded into immediate maturity like Minerva from the head of Jove — fully dowered and with gifts in her hands and armoured with the welded experience of the parent brain — she had no growing-up days. On the night of publication her first edition, of one hundred thousand copies, had been sold out. As Stevenson might have paraphrased himself (in the rich and genial Vailima Letters, with which she continued, in 1888, her second year of appeal to the ripest culture in America), she hopefully arrived without any journey whatever, which is the best of all ways to get there.

Here is Dr. Holland's last announcement in the old *Scribner's*:

The present Mr. Charles Scribner and I have ceased to be proprietors, and Mr. Roswell Smith has acquired about nine-tenths of the stock. The remainder has been divided among the young men who have done so much and worked so faithfully to make the magazine what it has been and what it is. I am glad they own it, and that it is Mr. Smith's design that they shall have more as they win the ability to purchase it. I owe so much to these men that I shall greatly rejoice in any substantial rewards that they may reap for their long and faithful service in building up the interests of the concern.

And here is the first announcement of the new *Century*:

Names do not make magazines but magazines give significance to names. We wholly sympathise with readers in their sentimental regard for our old name and wish it were never to be dropped, for it means more to us than it ever could mean to a subscriber and reader; but the reasons for the change are imperative. *Scribner's Monthly* started eleven years ago without a subscriber; the *Century* starts with virtually one hundred and twenty-five thousand subscribers. The former was begun without experience and with everything to learn; the latter lifts its fresh ensign upon a field of conquest. The former was obliged to go out among the men and women of letters and ask for contributions, which, in many instances, were doubtfully or questioningly rendered; the latter is overwhelmed with voluntary offerings of the best material from the best pens. The former sought in vain among artists and engravers for such illustrations as would satisfy its wants and realise its ideals; the latter begins with all the talent at its command which *Scribner's Monthly* helped to discover and develop. The same business manager is at the front, and the same editorial force controls and directs the pages, the same man directs the art department who made *Scribner's Monthly* famous as a reformer in the arts of designing and wood-engraving.

But it is destiny which disposes. Almost the last word Dr. Holland had written for the magazine he founded was, "With the burden of business responsibility lifted from my shoulders, I hope to find my hand more easily at work with my pen." Before the Far West saw the new fawn-coloured dress of the *Century*, replacing the too prosaic blue of the old *Scribner's*, the pen had dropped from his hand forever; and the issue which announced that its life was likely to continue, with unchanged name, perhaps for centuries, announced that the life of the editor was concluded.

The service the magazine rendered for Southern writers and for the reunion of the whole country sinks, however, almost to insignificance (if one may say so without being accused of cynicism!) beside the beneficence of another achievement, the end of which is not yet. It began the modern system of magazine advertising.

The history of periodical advertising in America pre-

sents three stages, that of the newspaper, of the weekly, and of the monthly. The stupendous development of American journalism, in which it has outstripped the world, would have been impossible without advertising patronage. The growth of newspapers, we are told, has been about a thousand per cent. in each half of the century. Newspaper advertising began as a habit with the last decade of the eighteenth century, but it cannot be said to have increased even proportionately until the third decade of the nineteenth, when it suddenly leaped forward with giant strides. This was by reason of the establishment of the *New York Sun* in 1833, the *Herald* in 1835, the *Philadelphia Public Ledger* in 1836, and the *New York Tribune* in 1841. Even for a long time after advertising space was regularly set aside in newspapers, however, the majority of them did not have any regular rates for advertising. Newspapers depended mainly upon subscriptions or graft (the latter the more dependable part of their income) and they got what they could for advertisements as extra revenue. "In the seventies," says Mr. George P. Rowell of *Printer's Ink*, "advertising had in the ordinary run of papers little standard of value. Conditions now are in every way almost inconceivably different. John Wanamaker spends more money for advertising every week in the dailies than A. T. Stewart did in a year."

It was Robert Bonner who first made the newspapers and the public appreciate what could be done with advertising. He would take a whole page of a paper, and say in it over and over again, "Fanny Fern Writes Only For the *Ledger*." My success, he cried aloud frankly and reverberatingly from every housetop, is owing to my liberality in advertising. "I get all the money I can lay my hands on and throw it out to the newspapers," he said, "and before I can get back to my office, there it all is again and a lot more with it." But his returns for this sort of advertising were due merely to the novelty of advertising in bulk and with display — when the novelty

wore away, as it happened in book advertising fifty years later, the method was no longer effective. Other advertising of his, however, was far more subtle and ingenious; and each new device for attracting attention to his weekly hit the bull's eye. They were legion. Godkin mentions one in a letter to a friend in 1858.

The great topic of the quidnuncs for the past few days has been Edward Everett's extraordinary undertaking to write for the New York *Ledger*, a two-penny weekly magazine circulating nearly three hundred thousand copies. It is filled with tales of the Demon Cabman, the Maiden's Revenge, the Tyrant's Vault, and a great variety of "mysteries" and "revelations," and, in short, barring its general decency of language, belongs to as low and coarse an order of literature as any publication in the world. By the lavish use of puffery à la Barnum, the proprietor, a journeyman printer four or five years ago, has amassed a large fortune. He offered to pay over to the Ladies Mount Vernon Association—a project in which Mr. Everett is greatly interested—the sum of \$10,000 in case the latter would undertake to write one article every week for one year. To the astonishment of the whole Union the ex-ambassador, ex-secretary, ex-president of Harvard University, ex-editor of the *Greek Reader*, the scholar, the exquisite, the one aristocrat of "the universal Yankee nation" has accepted the proposal. Bonner will no doubt shortly fill whole sides of the newspapers with announcements of the fact.

But whether it was because Bonner heroically maintained at home an idealism he could not exercise abroad (amazing figure!) or whether advertising in weeklies had not yet in his estimation become profitable, or whether his ingenious advertising mind had determined that the money lost in not accepting advertising in his own paper was money well spent for the most unique advertising he could get under the circumstances—the surprising fact is that he never even in the day of the *Ledger's* colossal success inserted a single advertisement. The paradox—as Gonoril might say—makes speech poor and breath unable! Certainly some weeklies had already begun to make fortunes out of advertising, under that pleasantest of systems which allowed them to get all of their text for nothing. Nor was the English reprint their only gratui-

tous fodder. Mr. Rowell remembers the *Waverly* of Boston, which lived entirely upon the effusions of romantic misses and young men at college, and never paid one cent for its contributions. It was a weekly, sold for ten cents, and it charged one dollar a line for its abundant advertisements. This admirable plan is by no means archaic, even if the international copyright law cuts off one source of free material and the vanity of young persons is now less easily appeased. A great many weeklies and monthlies exist solely for advertising purposes, especially in States where public opinion is not exacting in the matter of patent medicine and other questionable advertisements. Mr. Rowell raises a humorous eyebrow over the dozens of papers published in Augusta, Maine, the capital of the State, for prices ranging around twenty-five cents a year, and queries why the Post Office law should be so flouted. It is interesting to recall, as an example of how difficult it is to draw the line, that the *Delineator* was established, says he, for the purpose of advertising the Butterick Paper Patterns and with no other purpose. Yet bare as it was of other features, it early found more than a hundred thousand women glad to pay the subscription price in advance for it. The question of admitting it to the mails puzzled the clerks in the Post Office Department, but if they ever excluded it, the time of its exclusion was brief. Of so little account was considered the advertising it printed that the man who supplied the printing-ink took his pay in advertising space: at last accounting, the magazine was charging six dollars a line for advertising.

All this is quoted not to show the guile of the advertising man from the very start (where, oh, where is the need?) or the continuous performance of his growing importance (humiliating task for the scribe!), but to emphasise the fact that magazines did not once conceive advertising worth their attention nor did advertisers consider magazines worth their consideration. Mr. Rowell, who founded one of the earliest advertising agencies and

made in 1869 the first permanent lists of newspapers and periodicals for agency purposes, says that circumstances led him to buy a space on the outside cover page of *Our Young Folks* for the period of a year, hoping to sell it at a profit. But no one wanted to buy it and he had to use it himself. His advertisement after lying dormant for some time brought him in the end an advertiser, and he doubtless made the experience of assistance in furthering the as yet undeveloped work of the agency. This, then, was the condition of magazine advertising. To account for it, in face of the successful demonstration which advertising had already made in newspapers and some semi-literary periodicals, is not easy. It may have been because of the scorn of or indifference to the business end of the enterprise which had so often characterised even those magazines which tried to keep their feet on the ground and their heads out of the high air of idealism. From the very beginning most of them had genuinely disclaimed motives of commercial success — they had striven to mould minds and create a literature. To many such, advertising seemed sordid; and, indeed, they held themselves above all the details of the commercial side. One might have expected, perhaps, the most extreme cases of idealism in the pioneer publishers, as they appeared in State after State; and it is noticeable that everywhere the pioneer sentiment on advertising was contemptuous. The cruder the country the loftier the aspirations of its volunteer editors. But to Chicago in 1850 (though certainly crude and new enough) one would not have looked for juvenile idealisms — she already knew herself the capital of the northwestern Empire and had no illusions as to the foundation of her greatness. Consequently it is a striking illustration of the current literary attitude which was afforded by a miscellany called *Garden City*. This was founded by Sloan, the patent-medicine man, who had so profitably advertised his patent medicines in the *Gem of the Prairie* that he desired a magazine of his own. Mr. Fleming tells us that for the first few numbers he even

printed in his literary pages a "Sloan's Column." But although the magazine had its origin as an advertising medium, it gradually curtailed these notices of the proprietor's wares and throughout its last years admitted very little advertising of any kind. One is perhaps not surprised to hear that in 1854 it was merged into a Boston periodical, seeing how long it had been heading for the heights of sublimity. And even in Chicago there appeared something peculiarly base about advertising which made other schemes for self-support the less of two evils. The *Chicago Magazine* frankly announced that it expected to get revenue "daguerreotyping leading citizens and near-by towns," yet it said magnificently at the same time, "We respond to the wish of a contemporary that we might be able to dispense with advertising as an avenue of public patronage; but at present the law of necessity must overrule the law of taste."

What then demolished this elegant delusion? Both Mr. F. W. Ayer and Mr. Rowell, heads of our oldest and best advertising agencies, unite in saying it was *Scribner's*. The new order of things began in 1870 with the success and policy of this magazine. Yet like most new orders, it made its way slowly and in the face of opposition. The early *Harper's* was as conservative and as tentative in its attitude toward the innovation as it had been about introducing opinions into its pages. Mr. Rowell narrates an experience in *Forty Years An Advertising Agent*:

*Harper's* in 1868 not only did not seek advertisements but actually refused to take them. The writer remembers listening with staring eyes while Fletcher Harper the younger related that he had in the early seventies refused an offer of \$18,000 for the use of the last page for a year for an advertisement of the Howe Sewing Machine. I have stated that *Harper's* was established for the deliberate purpose of advertising the books published by the firm. In the early days the reading matter was largely made up of what might be called advance notices of forthcoming publications. Advertisements from outsiders were declined. The tempting proposition of the Howe people would have removed from the last page the prospectus that

told on what terms the *Magazine*, the *Weekly*, the *Bazar*, and the *Round Table* could be had either together or separately.

It is not clear why advertisers were so long content to let the magazine field go un essayed. If magazines had a way of failing, so had the weeklies and the dailies; and readers who paid a quarter and more for their periodical were perhaps more likely to patronise the local firms and the railroads that were the first advertisements to venture into the monthlies. The reason is probably to be found in that unprogressiveness of American business which seems to us to-day so antediluvian. That advertisers conquered their inertia at all appears to have been due to the industry of *Scribner's* in approaching them and the new Advertising Agent in corraling them. It was the latter who made possible the enormous growth of advertising. How enormous, Mr. Ayer figured out in 1894. That year the December issue of the *Century* had one hundred and thirty-four pages of advertising. *Harper's* in 1882, after thirty-two successful years without them, yielded to the inevitable and began to insert them: in December of 1894 it carried one hundred and forty-four pages. At the page rate of \$250, the advertising income of such an issue would be \$36,000. Putting the average amount at ninety-two pages a month, the advertising receipts of this one magazine would reach \$276,000. It is estimated that the December, 1894, issue of the six leading monthlies represented \$180,000.

Yet indispensable as the work of the agency had been in building this volume of business, the slowness of some magazines to appreciate the value of the service more than matched their early reluctance to advertise at all. Mr. Rowell gives an instance of this:

We were paying *Harper's Weekly* as much as five thousand a month, but as circulation statements from the office fell short of being definite, there came a time when the rating accorded by our directory failed to be satisfactory, and I went to Franklin Square to talk the matter over. I explained that we had to have the same sort of statement from one paper as another, what we asked from the *Bungtown Banner* we were obliged to



require from *Harper's Weekly*. There was a pause. The gentlemen looked at each other, and one quietly said to the others: "It seems to me if Mr. Rowell talks that way, we don't want to continue to do business with him"; and the others in a rather indifferent way appeared to coincide with that view. There was nothing more to be said and I came away. And the next advertising order sent out from the Rowell Agency was refused. By and by the rule was rescinded but in the meantime we had gotten out of the habit of recommending the paper, and a time came when instead of sending advertising to it to the amount of five thousand a month, I doubt if so much as that went to it, upon orders from our agency, in some periods of five years. When, a long time after, the old house of Harper and Brothers failed, I could but wonder whether the firm had been as successful in shutting off streams of revenue from numerous other sources.

By the end of the century the advertiser had become enthroned. There were agents who humorously suggested that the magazine of the twentieth century would contain just enough literary stuff to float the advertisements, and who recalled that friends of theirs resembled Gladstone in finding the latter more interesting than the former. Perhaps a prophetic eye or two had even discerned a distant day when an established magazine might change its make-up entirely for the sake of exploiting its advertising. The new *Scribner's* and *Lippincott's* had long since lured the readers to adventure hopefully in the vast hinterland of their advertising section by spreading artfully the disjected members of an illustrated comic throughout its length. Possibly this was the germ of an idea that was to scandalise the high brow and pucker the low in the early years of the twentieth century. Wiser than most, *Harper's* may, in resisting the advertisement for so long a time, have recognised the little rift that by and by would make all the music mute. Who knows? "The securing of contracts for advertising," blandly remarks a recent book on the subject, "is the main objective in a modern magazine. The receipts from purchasers at news stands and from subscribers cover only a small percentage of the total expenses of the production. The kind of goods most advertised are staples of home consumption. Hence

the people who must be reached by a magazine whose publishers wish to make it a medium for a large volume of advertising, are the home-maintainers. To get this advertising, you must have in the literary pages the stuff that will appeal to the people interested in those 'ads'!"

This leads us to one of the most interesting back-actions in the history of our periodicals. Godkin suggests it in an article in the *Atlantic* January, 1898.

The idea that the newspapers utter the opinions of which their readers approve is being made less tenable every year by the fact that more and more newspapers rely on advertising rather than on subscriptions for their support and profits; and agreement with their readers is thus less and less important to them. The old threat of "stopping my paper" if a subscriber came across unpalatable views in the editorial columns is therefore not so formidable as it used to be. The advertiser rather than the subscriber is now the newspaper bogie. He is the person before whom the publisher cowers and whom he tries to please; and the advertiser is very indifferent about the opinions of a newspaper. He wants to know how many persons see it rather than how many agree with it.

All this seems at first very encouraging. We have, then, the advertiser to thank that we may hear, as often as we do, what is being thought by people whose minds are more enlightened or unfettered than ours. Blessed be the *Century* that in helping itself so helped us all, when it founded modern magazine advertising. But Godkin's next sentence plunges us into despair again. "The consequence is that newspapers of largest circulation are less and less organs of opinion. In fact, in some cases, advertisers use their influence to prevent the expression of opinions. There are not many papers which can afford to defy a large advertiser."

If for "newspapers" you may read "magazines" (and possibly etiquette might even have caused the *Atlantic* to substitute the former for the latter word, had it been written), how drunk is now the hope wherein a moment ago we dressed ourselves! There is something quite dizzying about this transfer of moral sensitiveness from

the family-circle to the factory. What *are* we coming to? Oh *Century, Century* (as Sir Isaac said to his dog Diamond), if only you had known what you were doing! What avails the most beautiful temple to the Muses when you have unlocked the gates to the Barbarians?

## CHAPTER XIII

### SOME MAGAZINE NOTIONS DEAD AND DYING

THE nineteenth century in the magazines presented a long and amusing struggle with the theory of anonymity of authorship. It was part of the inherited attitudinising of literature, greatly reinforced in America by the gestures of Puritanism. Most periodicals and even some writers were eager to demonstrate that art should be its own reward; and having industriously sown the pretty idea throughout the land, it was hardly fair of them to complain so bitterly when coarser-fibred United States Congressmen ate the wheat that grew from it later. Authors, especially New England ones, liked to think of their calling as a thing remote from the market — particularly since, but for the soft word, their parsnips would have gone unbuttered anyway. And it was not to the interest of magazines to uproot the illusion — particularly since they themselves, having invested actual money in a losing enterprise, constantly found it the sole consolation for their expenditure. Thus each of the parties, gladly or otherwise, fanned the flame of their divinity. Some writers, too, seemed to have thought that magazine work was beneath them. Longfellow, for instance, more than once wrote to a periodical that he would contribute if he could do so anonymously. Some, too, seem genuinely to have felt that a tree should be known to the public only by its fruits. But whatever the reason, the lame showing that editors and authors made when they attempted to find a rational basis for anonymity as a policy, demonstrates that it was part of the sacrosanct pose of letters.

In the prospectus which Charles Brockden Brown wrote for his Philadelphia magazine in 1803 he said:

"I shall take no pains to conceal my name. Anybody may know it who chooses to ask me or my publisher, but diffidence or discretion hinders me from calling it out in a crowd; and I have an insuperable aversion to naming myself to my readers. But an author or editor who takes no pains to conceal himself cannot fail of being known to as many as desire to know him. . . . To accomplish his ends, the editor is secure of the liberal aid of many most respectable persons in this city and in New York. He regrets the necessity he is under of concealing these names since they would furnish the public with irresistible inducements to read what, *when* they had read, they would find sufficiently recommended by its own merits." It is easier to sympathise with Brown's temperamental objection than to understand the devious reasoning of his last remark. But the idea — firm-set, as we shall see, in the editorial mind — was certainly more explicable then than fifty years later when it was still flourishing. Ephemeral writing, although almost entirely confined to the professional classes, was still a business for vagabonds when it was not the pastime of gentlemen in mask. It was not a respectable occupation for any member of the middle class. Even forty years later, Holmes said that to be known as a writer would damage him as a doctor. But Brown's naïve statement that to mention the names of his contributors would destroy the initiative of the public, was to bob up again many times in the course of the century.

The Boston *American Monthly*, a third of a century later, achieved a more substantial reason for anonymity. As those who entered its portals must abandon individuality, why preserve their identity? "We still believe the use of names to be incompatible with the character of a periodical which aims to represent views, tastes, and opinions of its own and not to be an arena for desultory discussion; and which prefers the vigorous mental effort of the most obscure contributor to the use of a popular name however inspiring." Its contemporary the *Pearl*,

being of a contrary persuasion, did not fail to note the fact that in this very editorial the *American Monthly* had allowed itself to mention the name of its most valuable contributor. "Now *we* believe the use of names," it said, "to be quite compatible with the character of every respectable periodical. First, because if an article be worthy of publication, it is worth acknowledging; and second, because every particle of fame or notoriety is so much stock-in-trade or capital. Certainly, it is no compliment to a subscriber to say that he will esteem an article with a name superior to that without one which is of more worth. It may require more philosophy to judge impartially, but how much greater is the compliment to the reader." So little was the *Pearl* obsessed by the genteel tradition of letters and so convinced of the practical advantages accruing from the publication of names, that her conduct was scandalously commercial. Not only did she affix to articles the names of writers (that is, the important ones!) but she shamelessly blazoned them upon the cover and followed each with a list of his best-known works.

This practice was later continued by *Graham's* and others. The devotee party scornfully though hotly contested every step of the way — those who entered the convent of letters should drop their worldly names at the door. So much had both editors and authors parted with their carefully exploited sanctities under the compulsion of crude human nature and of cruder commercialism, that by 1844 *Godey's* called attention to the growing fashion of magazines' featuring authors as writing for them only. "We have had several applications lately to write for us exclusively. We now say to one and all, we do not wish to make any such arrangements. It is impossible for a writer to vary from month to month enough to please the patrons of a particular magazine." Nevertheless, *Godey's* yielded to the fashion in the case of the extraordinarily popular Miss Leslie, and at a later date similarly advertised Marion Harland as writing for

no other publication. Ever powerless were the Vestal Virgins to turn back the steady sweep of the invading barbarian! By 1848 a New York magazinist of English training was writing thus of American magazines to an English periodical:

Their editors make a considerable figure in the literary world and their contributors are sufficiently vain of themselves, as their practice of signing or heading articles with their names in full alone would show. One of the superficial peculiarities of American magazines, is that the names of *all* the contributors are generally paraded conspicuously on the cover, very few seeking even the disguise of a pseudonym. The number of most "remarkable" men and women who thus display themselves in print is really surprising. Willis's idea, so ridiculed by the *Edinburgh*, of a magazine writer becoming a great lion in society, is not there so great an absurdity.

But still the really elegant magazines, sustained by the consciousness of high literary purpose, clung to the purer view of the ministry of letters. The *Atlantic* toward the end of the next decade and *Putnam's* about the middle of it, held their torches high. Said the latter in opening:

We pray the reader to enter, and pardon this delay at the door. Within he will find poets, wits, philosophers, critics, artists, travellers, men of erudition and science—all strictly masked, as becomes worshippers of that invisible Truth which all our efforts and aims will seek to serve. And as he turns from us to accost those masks, we remind the reader of the young worshipper of Isis. For in her temple at Sais upon the Nile, stood her image forever veiled. And when an ardent Neophyte passionately besought that he might see her and would take no refusal, his prayer was granted. The veil was lifted and the exceeding splendour of her beauty dazzled him to death. Let it content you, dear reader, to know that behind those masks are those whom you much delight to honour—those whose names, like the fame of Isis, have gone into other lands.

At the close of the first volume, this lyric nonsense was somewhat elucidated. Behind it lay a policy diplomatic and, alas! commercial. The editors announced that their conviction had been that their best aid would come from younger writers with names yet unknown, and they had

determined to present these on a perfect equality with illustrious contributors whose names alone would grant an audience — for in literature the newcomer is always treated as an intruder. This illogical rhapsody, then, had been only literary hocuspocus to conceal the fact that the major part of their contributions were to come from new and hence not high-priced writers. Alike equivocal was the position of the other aristocratic magazines. Says Scudders' Lowell:

Articles in the *Atlantic* as in the *North American* were unsigned, but the authorship was for the most part an open secret. The *North American* used to print a little slip with the authorship of the separate articles set against the successive numbers of the articles; and this slip although not inserted in all the copies sold or sent to subscribers, was at the service of newspapers and the inner circle. The authorship of the principal articles of the *Atlantic* always leaked out. The authors themselves sometimes were glad of the privacy, as they thought it secured them more independence and possibility of frankness. "For myself," wrote Lowell in 1859 [from the editorial chair], "I have always been opposed to the publication of authors' names at all." The practice of withholding names publicly continued till 1862, when the index at the end of the volume disclosed the authorship, and in 1870 the practice was begun of signing contributions.

Nevertheless, Lowell knew perfectly well that the authorship of his principal articles always came out; and he not only counted upon its doing so but recognised it as an asset. Pleasant is it also to observe that his business dealings were squarer than his mental processes. "You must be content," he wrote to a contributor. "Six dollars a page is more than can be got elsewhere, and we only pay ten to folks whose *names* are worth the other four dollars." The contributor might indeed have been content, for in those times many writers were both nameless and penniless too. This was Lucy Larcom's experience with her most famous poem. "The little song Hannah Binding Shoes was brought into notice in a peculiar way — by me being accused of stealing it, by the editor of the magazine to which I had sent it with a



request for the usual remuneration if accepted. Accidentally or otherwise, this editor lost my note and signature, and then denounced me by name in a newspaper as a 'literary thiefess'; having printed the verses with a nom de plume in his magazine without my knowledge. So far as successful publication goes, perhaps the first I considered so came when a poem of mine was accepted by the *Atlantic Monthly*, and as the poet Lowell was at that time editing the magazine I felt especially gratified. That and another poem were each attributed to a different person among our prominent poets, the *Atlantic* at that time not giving authors' signatures." The anonymity of the articles, remarked Higginson somewhat wryly, caused many amusing mistakes, "although in time the errors might be cleared up if people cared enough to find out." It would seem, then, that for all its high-sounding justifications anonymity was merely a means of advertisement, a way to get the contributions talked about. Here was a most subtle method of serving the high gods and the low gods at once.

The uncomplimentary notion that a reader's attention must be constantly stimulated by the thought that perhaps the article he was reading had been written by some important personage, was held by the *Nation* also. It said in 1866: "An article of which the author is known is hardly ever judged on its merits. If he is still obscure most people will not take the trouble to read what he says; if he is famous, they will devour the veriest twaddle that comes from his pen and insist on fresh supplies every day." The latter seems permanently true, although there exists of course no compulsion upon a magazine to publish even signed twaddle unless it desires to do so, and the *Nation* was far from proposing to publish twaddle of any kind. But if it were ever true that obscure magazine writers were skipped without being read, it would not have been possible for any authors to become famous by reason of their magazine work — and owing to the extreme limitation of the book market

through the lack of international copyright, most American authors in the nineteenth century won their reputations in the magazines. It is apparent that they refused to blush unseen by their praisers, even if, by the policy of some high-class editors, they were at times compelled to waste their sweetness in the air of the most cultivated regions. No journal would contend for anonymity now on precisely the old basis. But for the larger part of the century, no editor saw that this was as absurd as if a theatrical manager should insist that his actors all go nameless, since some had to play the small parts.

The *Nation's* canon of unsigned contributions went hand in hand with that of absolute editorial control. "All expression of opinion," said Mr. A. J. Sedgwick in retrospect, "were avowed as those of the paper itself; and all articles and reviews were paid for to be published by the paper and to be revised and amended both for style and occasionally for matter. This rule used to be regarded as the secret of good and responsible journalism, as it was once of quarterly reviewing." And this quotation brings us to the history of that vexed and delicate question, the "editorial privilege" of magazines.

Historically, editorial policy is the child of editorial partisanship. The earlier magazines were constantly asserting that all political and religious controversy would be rigorously avoided. It is a pity that editors ever deemed themselves compelled to forget that the title selected for their particular literary product was meant to signify a general storehouse of literary commodities, whose reason for existence was its unrestricted variety. That a magazine should seek to occupy a particular field and appeal for subscribers by reason of doing so, is only common sense; but it does not appear why any further editorial policy is desirable. Unfortunate is it for literature and for American civilisation that the magazines of the nineteenth century, could not, and afterwards would not, hold to the position stated in the *American*

*Magazine and Historical Chronicle* (Boston, 1743-46), whose motto was *Jucunda Varietas*. "The encouragements that compositions of this nature have met with in Great Britain from people of all ranks and different sentiments in religion, politicks, etc., has induced us to begin the Publication. Our readers will do us the justice neither to applaud nor blame us for the right or wrong opinions, sentiments, or doctrines that may from time to time occur in these pages, because we are to be considered as meer reporters of facts. All our praise, if we deserve any, will be that of collecting carefully, abridging with judgment and preserving the most perfect impartiality."

But such an Arcadian state of simplicity was not long allowed to exist. By the opening of the century, editors of magazines were beginning to feel, in the growing competition of newspapers, that they must identify themselves with political parties or forfeit support. The *National Magazine* (Richmond, 1799-1800) gave one of the earliest indications of the tendency. "The American people have long enough been imposed upon by pretended impartiality — it is all a delusion. It is as incongruous for a publication to be alternately breathing the spirit of two parties as for a parson to preach to his audience Christianity in the morning and Paganism in the evening. Every editor who is capable of soaring above the flattery of villainy and the adulation of power has too much at stake to admit of neutrality. Animated by a zeal for the Republican cause and stimulated to exertion by a perfect abhorrence for governmental fraud and usurpation, I shall in the subsequent, like the preceding numbers, select and introduce such facts and arguments as will tend more directly to break the talisman and remove the mask of federal delusion and imposture."

In the record of this magazine, the historian of the nineteenth century may read the entire history of "editorial privilege." Its stated object was to transmit to posterity the most valuable productions of the American

pen already published, and it at once began editorially to winnow them! So lofty was its ideal that in the beginning it even refused original effusions, and it turned an obdurate shoulder to "a selection from trifling amusements." (When it discovered that it could not survive on so stern a regimen, it began to introduce lighter essays but it retained, in the wider field, its rigid editorial policy of partisanship.) It edited everything, to the top of its bent, and nothing was permitted to intrude into even so frankly frivolous a subject as Feminine Garrulity (on which both political parties might supposedly unite) that could possibly be interpreted as supporting the "Federal Delusion."

The idea that it was necessary for a magazine to maintain a rigid policy and subject all its contributors to censorship, once started, gained momentum rapidly. Editors, even when they avowed themselves free from party bias, as rigorously maintained a personal one. Our magazine history is full of abortive attempts to establish publications where vigorous writers denied admission to the current press might have some place to go; and the new magazines had no sooner sprouted than the radicals turned conservative and the ex-excommunicates began to excommunicate on their own account. Even Poe, Ishmael as he was and with, also, his larger vision of the destiny of the magazine than any of his contemporaries, demanded to be literary dictator in the periodical he projected. The *Stylus* should present an aristocracy of brains alone without regard to political or religious creed, yet continuity and marked certainty of purpose were the prime requisites of a magazine stamped with that individuality essential to its success. This was attainable only where one mind alone had, at least general, control; and experience had shown him that in founding a journal of his own lay his sole chance of carrying out his peculiar intentions. Lowell, also, believed that a magazine should have but one editor. He wrote to Briggs that bitter experience on the *Pioneer* had shown him that only thus

could individuality be preserved — and we shall see that when he became authoritative editor of one, he, like Poe, made purely personal exactions, petty and large, upon his contributors in the name of general good taste and judgment. By the middle of the century, so fixed had become the idea that it was necessary for a literary magazine to maintain a rigid policy, that Bristed made it the chief basis of his complaint against the habit of gratuitous contributions upon which most of our magazines were compelled to exist. "The gratuitous contribution destroys all homogeneousness and unity of tone in the periodicals of America by preventing them from having any permanent corps of writers. The editor must now and then be under the disagreeable necessity of paying for an article if only to carry off their ordinary vapid matter, but not often enough to make it an object to a good writer to attach himself to the concern. The unpaid writers, since the editors want variety and the writers the justification of their vanity, are migratory and appear in the greatest number of periodicals possible. Accordingly, it is not uncommon for a periodical to change its opinion on men and things three or four times a year." Out of all the benefits of an international copyright which would enable editors to pay every contributor, he thought that the greater homogeneousness which they could then maintain was the chief. Considerations of common honesty and of permitting a literature to be self-supporting were less important than preserving the artistic and intellectual integrity of a periodical!

A high-class magazine as the repository of opinions to which it was not committed and for which the editor assumed no responsibility was still far in the future. Knick, as we have seen, had stoutly maintained but the one opinion that it should express no opinions whatever; and *Harper's* had followed suit. *Putnam's* did not long exist to demonstrate its, at best, only partial adherence to the doctrine that a magazine of high and national tone might venture to voice ideas not held by the popular

majority; other journals of free opinion and owning no special allegiance, did not live long enough to disturb the conviction that *Knickerbocker* had followed the only safe path open to a literary magazine of general circulation. Bulwarks of civilisation, like the *North American*, could shelter no poisonous or radical growths; they were supposed to endorse every doctrine they disseminated. Norton wrote to a friend when he and Lowell took control of the magazine that they intended to secure expression for the nation's clearest thought; but both of them were thoroughly imbued with the prevalent editorial notion that no thought was clear which they were unwilling to follow. Henry Adams and Henry Cabot Lodge terminated their brief careers as editors of the *Review* because the owners would not sponsor an incendiary article in 1876 in favour of voting independently. Yet Mr. Howells says that Adams imparted such amazing life and go to the magazine that his predecessor Lowell generously declared that the new editor was making the old tea-kettle realise that it was of the same race as the steam-engine. The vigour was entirely owing to the occasional novelty of a radical opinion in the *North American*. It was, indeed, because the magazine had been made a monthly and could discuss questions while they were still debatable and thereby provoke a clash of opinion, that it became a live issue. Many subscribers thought the pillars of society were crumbling when the rash Mr. Rice harboured the ravening Ingersoll in a triangle discussion with Gladstone and Cardinal Manning, upon the evidence for Christian belief. Perhaps it was the spectacle of the *North American* being purchased upon the news-stands by thousands of non-subscribers, just as if it had been some casual and ordinary journal, which made the first large dent in the editorial conviction that a magazine was under the necessity of fathering its children. Yet the Asylum idea, promulgated by the *American* in 1743 and so long discarded, was by no means resumed even in the newer journals. Some which an-

nounced that they intended to discuss ideas ran the normal course from radical to conservative as they became established, the process being decidedly hastened by the increasing shift of editorial concern from the subscriber to the advertiser. The protestants often ended by being as thoroughly "edited" as the partisans. Toward the end of the century the great outbreak of the little magazines came as a protest against the suppression on the part of the established ones of all convictions which were new. And, in general, protestant or partisan, if the editor did not agree with the author, or did not care to seem to do so, the latter might take his wares elsewhere. Holmes in one of his later prefaces to the *Autocrat* comments upon the great change in the expressibility of new opinions since the *Atlantic* articles first appeared: "One may express his doubts upon anything now," he says, "so long as one does it civilly." To this it should be added, "and so long as one was a Holmes." The condition was summed up by a member of The Contributors' Club in an *Atlantic* for 1900.

I know a periodical which counts its subscribers by hundreds of thousands which will not risk the loss of a hundred by printing an article, otherwise pronounced to be wholly satisfactory, in which the doctrine of Evolution is assumed as true. The editors, the directors, the very office-boys admit that doctrine; but there is a haunting fear of some shadowy subscriber in the Middle West who might be offended. "The policy of the office" is to be colourless. But to have literature or art, you must have a basis of belief (whether the belief is right or wrong) and belief has colour. It has been found—we have brilliant instances of it among our great magazines—that astonishingly useful work may be done inside of the most restricted limits. When so much can be done and has been done within these safe walls, why risk influence and power, says the editor—for mere circulation is an immense power—by going beyond them? The "safe" view is not calculated to foster literature in its widest or in its best sense.

The Contributor's complaint is abundantly confirmed in the lives and letters of authors. It had been the practice of both editors and publishers to preserve the ortho-

doxy of their writers. Possibly no editor had ever gone the length Holmes pictures in one of his Autocrat poems:

scowl            howl            scoff            sneer

Then a ~~smile~~, and a ~~glass~~ and a ~~toast~~ and a ~~cheer~~  
 strychnine and whiskey, and ratsbane and beer  
 For all the ~~good wine, and we've some of it here,~~  
 In cellar, in pantry, in attic, in hall,  
 Down, down, with the tyrant that masters us all!  
~~Long live the gay servant that laughs for us all!~~

But with the editor's habit of allowing the author to discover only in print the alterations which his conscience or his policy or his preference demanded, there is no reason why he should not have done so. In ante-bellum days, editors had gone quite as far as in one direction at least. Parke Godwin says it was the common practice of publishers in the thirties and forties to mutilate important passages concerning slavery in the foreign works they had appropriated. Even the *Atlantic*, then flying the anti-slavery banner, walked a tight-rope. Lowell wrote to Higginson in 1859, "Editorially I am a little afraid of John Brown and Ticknor would be more so." If the adults of Philadelphia were never allowed to come upon the word "slavery" in their periodicals, the youngsters of Boston were similarly shielded from mention of another evil—it is said that one could never speak of death in the pages of that phenomenally successful periodical, the *Youth's Companion*. All the magazines in our Victorian era had their forbidden topics in common and each had its own in particular. Not only must the Young Person be kept uncorrupted from the world but the sensibilities of the old must not be shocked. Even the reformers, as we have so frequently seen, had rigorous limitations of their own; or those who were not editors encountered, in the periodicals which admitted them, a definite dictum of So far shalt thou go and no farther.

Lowell, having so often refused to toe the mark as contributor, insisted that Stedman do so; and Holland himself anathematised for creating a confusion in the



realm of morals, sought in the *Century* to make Stedman voice his own idea of the immorality of Whitman. In 1882 Curtis wrote to Norton: "I have resigned the editorship of *Harper's Weekly*. My article upon Folger's nomination, despite my request, was perverted and made to misrepresent my views and to make me absolutely ridiculous. The blow to me and to the good cause is very great and not exactly retrievable. To-day I am thought by every reader of the paper to be a futile fool. The thing is so atrocious as to be comical." The *Weekly* promptly confessed the mistake whereby the editorial had been edited, and Curtis withdrew his resignation. Gail Hamilton had often to defend her contributions to preserve them from verbal alterations which she thought damaged the integrity of her ideas. "I always lay out my work by reducing my editors to subjection," she wrote in 1887, having been on the crest of success long enough to conduct aggressive warfare. "It is impossible to accomplish anything so long as an editor is liable to pop up at the critical moment with a will of his own; when he is properly subjected, the rest is easy!" With the "policy of the office" and the natural conservatism of the periodicals of the nineteenth century, such an independent and vigorous thinker as she must have frequently collided. It is not improbable that every voicing of a new idea in the entire century of magazines, represents a compromise between author and editor.

That an author should be made to say other than he believed or say it in a fashion other than he intended, is a survival of the pontifical past of print. Charles Reade in his *Memoirs* suggested the main reason for this when he was polishing off the editor of *Once a Week* (London) for tampering with his text. "I have been obliged to tell him that he must distinguish between anonymous contributions and those in which an approved author takes the responsibility of signing his own name. Answer — That with every wish to oblige me, he cannot resign his editorial functions. Answer — That if he

alters my text I will publicly disown his alteration in an advertisement and send no more manuscript to the office. On this he seems to be down on his luck a little. For he confines himself to ending my last number on the feeblest sentence *he* can find out, and begging me to end the tale as soon as possible, which, of course, I shall not do to oblige him. But all this makes me feel that I am a very quarrelsome man or that some other authors must be very spiritless ones. Is it not monstrous that a person whose name does not appear should assume to alter the text of an approved author who signs his name?"

Here is the situation all stated. Authors as a class have been willing to make all concessions to editors to get into print. Some of these concessions were in deference to what the editors thought the public would demand, and some to what they themselves demanded. The editor's fight for subscribers compelled him to preserve the orthodoxy of his authors, but the author's desire for publication need not have compelled him to yield to the editor's exactions in matters of taste. In America, he did so in the earlier magazines because he knew the editor to be his superior; and when the time arrived that this was no longer the case, the editorial habit had been contracted. But aside from this, the American editor seems to have felt from the beginning that he belonged to a more responsible class than the author, and continued, perhaps unaware, the habit of treating him as "a rogue and a vagabond" who should be grateful for slipping into good society, even when the position had become somewhat reversed and the author was the more socially responsible person of the two.

In the history of our magazines one is struck with the continuous arrogance of the editorial attitude, not only in matters of opinion and taste but in property rights. It was not merely that even the most scrupulous editors made changes and asked permission after the articles had appeared in print. ( But it seems to have been taken for granted that the author voluntarily severed all connection

with his manuscript when he sent it to the office. If rejected, it was not returned or it was carved up for the Editor's Table in anonymous slices; if accepted, the author need not be notified or paid or thanked, unless he were important enough to deserve the unusual recognition. He had committed his offspring to a Charity School, and should be thankful if it received lodging and was clad in the uniform of the concern; or he had handed it over to a Finishing Institution where its deportment was so corrected or its features so remoulded that "to recognise one's own child again" on its reappearance was considered flattering to the father. "The coolness with which an editor would graciously accept an article and print it without a word of thanks or a cent of payment," writes Congdon, "was even then irritating, though we did not expect anything else. Now it would be regarded as a piece of swindling." Congdon was writing his reminiscences in 1880, yet at that time there were plenty of lesser magazines still pursuing the tradition of an editor's right to a submitted manuscript. Even now there is no law against arbitrary editorial changes, and some authors who have recognised their offspring with indignation have appealed to the courts in vain. Notions of literary property have now, it is true, become less confused, and in some magazines even alteration in copy has come to be regarded the dishonesty and impertinence it really is. But this last seignorial right is dying hard. And chiefly it would seem to be on account of the spiritlessness of authors of which Reade speaks. Sufferance had too long been the badge of all their tribe and they had too often informed the editor that it would be considered a favour to print. "The favour of giving room and circulation to a man's ideas," said the *Mirror* in 1844, "is growing now into a salable commodity — the editor even charges rent for his columns instead of hiring a tenant."

The custom of editorial alterations in America is a heritage from the days when an editor's chief business was to provide his own material, other material being

entirely lacking or being furnished by writers frankly inexperienced. To prune and patch whatever manuscripts came in at that un plentiful period was a step necessary to the generally anonymous publication, quite aside from the editor's own particular tastes and whimsies or the policy of the magazine. But apparently editors became fastidious just as soon as they could afford to be, and began to impose their own notions of perfection upon the material of their contributors. Theophilus Parsons of the *United States Literary Gazette* wrote to Longfellow in 1824: "I think you will not be offended by my sincerity in saying that while all the pieces you have sent me would be creditable to any journal, they are susceptible of improvement, from alterations calculated not to supply deficiencies but to remove imperfections." The next month he is writing, obviously in response to a remonstrance, "Some of my alterations please me now no better than they please you." Theophilus Parsons never demonstrated his right to give directions to Longfellow; but Bryant, editor of the *New York Review*, was in a more assured position when he altered the poems of R. H. Dana. Yet perhaps the length to which he felt himself entitled to go and the fact that he published first and then asked permission, may both indicate how much remained of the editor's notion of his prerogative when his earlier necessities no longer existed. "You will see in a copy of our magazine which I send you that I have changed your crow to a raven. I do not know that you will like the metamorphosis but it is a change only in the title." Here, because of a pseudo-poetic preference for an English word of hallowed usage and without even being able to plead metrical considerations, he converted some homely and accurate observations about a crow into a pointless misfit. A little later, he Bryantised another of Dana's poems. "As you seemed to give me leave to make alterations, I have taken the liberty. But I found it impossible to alter two lines which would not agree in measure without altering several

of the neighbouring lines. I have also ventured to make some changes where the sentences were continued from one couplet to another; and in other cases where I thought the idea not sufficiently brought out, I have taken the liberty to simplify it a little. But you will see all the mutilations I have made when you receive the journal." Many letters of the same nature he wrote to Dana; and what was going on in the case of Dana was the fate of all the poems he admitted to the *New York Review*. They were all less or more adapted by Bryant from the authors who had written them.

Holmes, who filed his poetry to the last degree before it left the workshop and who could not have failed to know himself the most careful artisan in America, felt particularly aggrieved by the editorial function. He wrote to James Freeman Clarke in 1836: "The four things were all published in the *American Monthly*, and when I found one of my offspring altered and mutilated in the magazine, I determined not to write any more at present.

What care I though the dust is spread  
Around these yellow leaves,  
Or o'er them his sarcastic thread  
Oblivion's insect weaves.

My pet expression in the two last-quoted lines was changed by the New York editor on his own responsibility into 'Or o'er them his *corroding* thread,' which occasioned much indignation on my part and a refusal to write until he would promise to keep hands off." He was sending a poem to Clarke for his *Western* magazine, and added, "if you print, print correctly." He says he was as much harassed by the carelessness of printers and proof-readers as he was by the pains of the editorial staff to improve his work. On one occasion when he sent a poem in his neat precise handwriting, he wrote to the editor: "Poems are rarely printed correctly in newspapers. This is the reason why so many poets die young. Please correct carefully." To Griswold on *Graham's* he

wrote with the manuscript: "Do you want my poem? If so, what will you give me for it? And can it be published in your magazine word for word, letter for letter, comma for comma?" In later life he had no occasion to complain of unauthorised alterations, yet he had apparently no illusions as to the reason for his immunity. "My Dear Young Lady," runs a letter in 1892, "As to your literary questions, I do not see how you can help yourself if an editor alters your papers, except by becoming so important to him that you make it a condition of publishing your articles that they shall not in any way be tampered with. I remember writing an article for the *North American Review* many years ago in which the editor *claimed his editorial right* to change things to suit himself, and altered just *one* word,— for the worse. I submitted. Long afterwards, when the article was reprinted, I altered it back again as it was at first. I believe editors do claim that right until their contributors get too important to be interfered with, and I think all you would get by complaining would be to find the door of that particular periodical closed against you."

It is amusing to recall that Willis, doubtless the mutilator of a million manuscripts (for most of which he paid nothing), violently quarrelled with his co-editor Morris because the latter had altered his punctuation. Willis, who thought that he had emancipated notions of that inexact science, wrote once to a printer, "If I insert a comma in the middle of a word, do you place it there and ask no questions." Both Leland and Lowell took themselves very seriously as arbiters of taste. Said Leland in 1857 in a letter to Griswold, the former occupant of his editorial chair on *Graham's*: "I have found out that by editing such an affair conscientiously and properly, one can do a great deal toward improving the tone and quality of popular writing—that a literary editor can in fact do as much as several school masters, so far as teaching the art of writing is concerned. It is really a matter of regret to see that so many editors seem

to care so little for this, or in fact for anything but themselves." In 1858, Lowell wrote to Norton about editing the *Atlantic*: "I cannot stand the worry of it much longer without a lieutenant. To have questions of style, grammar, and punctuation in other people's articles to decide, while I want all my concentration for what I am writing myself — to have added to this, personal appeals from ill-mannered correspondents whose articles have been declined, to attend to — to sit at work sometimes fifteen hours a day, as I have done lately — makes me very nervous, takes away my pluck, compels my neglecting my friends, and induces the old fits of blues. To be editor is almost as bad as being President." He had written to Higginson concerning the insertion of one word, an insertion which he thought would be more diplomatic, "I never allow any personal notions of mine to interfere, except in cases of obvious obscurity, bad taste, or bad grammar." He thought he was adhering to the same ideals when he came to edit the *North American*, but in 1866 he was writing to Stedman: "We do not ask that our contributors should always agree with us — except in politics; of course, *there*, the *Review* must be consistent. But otherwise anybody who has ideas is thrice welcome." Stedman must have been amused when some months later he wrote about this same article: "I shall take the liberty to make a verbal change here and there, such as I am sure you would agree to could we talk the matter over. I think, for example, you speak rather too well of young Lytton, whom I regard both as an impostor and as an antinomian heretic. Swinburne I must modify a little, as you will see, to make the *Review* consistent with itself. But you need not be afraid of not knowing your own child again." Lowell would have been genuinely surprised to hear that a later generation would regard such alterations, "to make the *Review* consistent with itself" and with Lowell, not only as depriving personal opinions of all value and interest, but as dishonest.

The *Atlantic* sanctum in its authoritative days always wielded a busy blue pencil. Higginson says that at a period when he used to spend days and weeks on single sentences, he would find his careful composition hashed by the editor. "I wish to be understood as giving a suppressed but audible *growl*," he wrote to Underwood, "at the chopping knife which made minced meat of my sentences. It is something new. I don't think I tend to such very long sentences; and it isn't pleasant to think that they belong to such a low order of organisation that they can be chopped in the middle and each half wriggle away independently." Higginson polished his prose as assiduously as Holmes did his verse; and the corrections made in his manuscript were prescribed merely by a difference of taste and not by any considerations of nicety and clarity, as was the case with the shaggy and crude sentences of Mrs. Stowe. These, Mr. Howells said, had almost an appalling correctness by the time he had finished with them. And, too, Mrs. Stowe was quite conscious of the raw chunks in which her careless writing was projected and never minded any amount of carving to make them presentable, being anxious only about the ideas and the emotion which she felt herself to be merely a mouth-piece for. Fields emphatically believed that an editor should be a refining force. Some correspondence with Stedman on the subject of the latter's most famous poem is interesting. Fields wrote to Stedman: "Bravo! Pan in Wall Street couldn't be better. In the line, 'Though pants he wore of mongrel hue,' I hope you will substitute the word *trousers* — pants being a word below the rank of so excellent a piece." Stedman answered Fields: "Pants is an American vulgarism and no mistake — but you are a poet yourself, and if you'll just try to alter that stanza with anything else to preserve the effect, you'll appreciate the exigencies of the case. Pants may be tolerated when you recollect that Pan is in a Yankee street and guise, and observed by a Yankee — but choose according to your judgment (which I most sincerely re-



spect).” Fields had his way. Stedman may well have remembered the episode when he wrote in 1874 to Howells, then the editor of the *Atlantic*: “You know I can write correct, finished, æsthetic sonnets and quatrains — can do it every day, but am tired of such work. Don’t you think we bookmen, as editors, might profit by Browning’s line, ‘He o’er-refines — the scholar’s fault’? I don’t believe that either you or I would have printed The Heathen Chineese, coming from an unknown author; it is so very different from the polished level of Miss Hunt, Mrs. Thaxter etc. Yet it would have been a good thing to print.”

If Stedman’s employment of “pants” in a poem grated on the fastidiousness of Fields, one may imagine the long row-royal of the robust Mark Twain with his editors. To escape explosion he once let off steam in a letter which he wrote but did not send. Through the corrections, paragraph by paragraph, he went. “Do you think that you have added just the right smear of polish to the closing clause of the sentence? Plain clarity is better than ornate obscurity. I have not concerned myself about feelings, but only about stating the facts. Elsewhere I have said several uncourteous things, but you have been so busy editing commas and semi-colons that you overlooked them and failed to get scared at them. It is discouraging to try to penetrate a mind like yours. You ought to get it out and dance on it. That would take some of the rigidity out of it. And you ought to use it sometimes; that would help. If you had done this every now and then along through life, it would not have petrified. You really must get your mind out and have it repaired; you see for yourself that it is all caked together. ‘Breaking a lance’ is a knightly and sumptuous phrase, and I honour it for its hoary age and for the faithful service it has done in the prize composition of the school-girl, but I have ceased from employing it since I got my puberty, and must solemnly object to fathering it here.” Some time afterwards Mr. S. S. McClure had

a project to start a magazine with Mark Twain as editor. In a letter setting forth his determination that he would not have anything to do with a magazine that intended to be *comic*, he added: "I shall write for this magazine every time the spirit moves me; but I look for my largest entertainment in editing. I have been edited by all kinds of people for more than thirty-eight years; there has always been somebody in authority over my manuscript and privileged to improve it; this has fatigued me a good deal, and I have often longed to move up from the dock to the bench and rest myself and fatigue others. My opportunity has come, but I hope I shall not abuse it overmuch. I mean to do my best to make a good magazine; I mean to do my whole duty and not shirk any part of it. There are plenty of distinguished artists, novelists, poets, story-tellers, philosophers, scientists, explorers, fighters, hunters, followers of the sea and seekers of adventure; and with these to do the hard and valuable part of the work with the pen and the pencil, it will be a comfort and joy to me to walk the quarter-deck and superintend."

Mark's enthusiasm fizzled out entirely when he found that as well as sitting in judgment upon the work of others he was expected to sit at an editorial desk and superintend all the practical details of getting out a magazine. And this brings us to another reason for editorial alterations.

The architectural exactions of magazines, with their practical problem of space, have necessarily made editors pragmatists. The last-moment requirements of make-up have often been less flexible than the conscience called upon to meet them. Into the Procrustes bed of the available inches all articles must be fitted. Doubtless they have been lopped oftener than lengthened, but authors have complained of filling as well as of filing. A contemporary magazine which eschews verse has an inalterable law that an article must be made to end at the bottom of the page. The serviceability of verse to

patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw was early recognised. Possibly that was the reason, as much as the equally prudent humanitarian one, why the early magazines so soon gave up the habit of printing all their verse in a department at the end. In the matter of stanzas The Lord High Executioner appears often to have made the punishment fit the crime, even to the extent of boiling in oil. Not all poets were treated with the consideration given to Stedman when Fields wrote him, "I will print your poem so soon as I find a niche for it." The eternal predicament which makes the editor a space-server found a unique remonstrant in the person of John Hay; yet novel as the situation was, the author's accusation of unintelligent condensation was the customary one. For four years the *Century* had been printing the Hay-Nicolay Lincoln. Most people thought the magazine had been more than generous in allotting space for the series of forty articles; and Hay heartily agreed with them, although it utilised only a third of the mammoth work. "I see," he wrote, "the *Century* folks have whacked about all the life out of the November instalment. But I approve every excision large or small that brings us nearer the end. My complaint is that they are printing too much. As it is, they cut out about every third paragraph, destroying the significance of a chapter without gaining materially in space. I avoid calling there when I go to New York, as our interviews are invariably disagreeable."

In his autobiography Mr. S. S. McClure, while he takes on the one hand a very temperate position about editorial infallibility, shows on the other an unshaken confidence in the editor's right to insist upon changes. Professional readers for magazines, he says, become in time the victims of their own taste and successes, and the absolutely open mind is rare with them. Yet he apparently refused to allow other editors to consult the exigencies of space — admittedly an impersonal necessity confronting an editor — while he himself was exercising his

editorial function in a matter of opinion. "I told Stevenson I would publish *The Black Arrow* (for the Newspaper Syndicate) if he would let me omit the first five chapters. He readily consented to this. Like all writers of the first rank, he was perfectly amiable about changes, and was not handicapped by the superstition that his words were sacrosanct. I never knew a really great writer who cherished his phrases or was afraid of losing a few of them. First-rate men always have plenty more. Only writers of inferior talent and meagre equipment feel they are lowering the flag if they consent to any changes in their manuscript." Thus does Mr. McClure astutely muzzle all barkers. Object to my changes, says he, and confess yourself second-rate. Yet it is interesting to note that if the editors accepting his syndicate service had had their way, every one of the first twelve Sherlock Holmes stories would have been trimmed — especially as it was not until the entire series had been published that the stories really caught on with the public.

As the century drew to a close, entered another disturbing element. With the exploitation of advertising, the magazine author's path grew more straightened still. This phase of the editorial function is ticklish in the extreme and one may not rashly venture upon it, either with wise saws or with modern instances. Of these latter they are plenty, and some that are more amazing than fiction; but the prudent historian does not walk into a beehive.

Even theoretically, the problem is acutely complicated. Certainly, it is too much to ask of breakable bones that an editor deliberately saw off the bough he is sitting on. His once haunting fear of the man in the Middle West has been largely supplanted by his fear of the man in the back-districts of his own periodical. As long as editor and advertiser are agreed on basic principles, it is plain sailing. (There shall be no free advertising in the literary pages, and nothing paid for at space rates in the advertising columns ought to be attacked in the literary ones,

either explicitly or by implication. These two would seem to constitute a simple and definite rule of thumb; but unfortunately the thumbs are all fingers. The rub lies in the implications and here is infinite room for mischief. And here the scribe resolutely shuts up his drawer of facts and launches boldly upon frank extravaganza.

Let us imagine that Dr. X. has discovered that tuberculosis is spread by insanitary handkerchiefs and longs to inform an afflicted world of his incalculable discovery by means of its periodical of widest circulation. The editor agrees with him and scents a double edition. "Publish!" cry the handkerchief-makers elate. "It means more handkerchiefs!" But hold, the doctor wishes to substitute thin sheets of sulphuretted asbestos. "Publish and we withdraw our advertisement!" they chorus as one man. Meanwhile, all the advertising sanatoria have prepared a protest. "The linen handkerchief is the symbol of civilisation itself! What will become of the laundresses? How dare the editor gratuitously exploit the asbestos industry? Let him recollect that there are a hundred advertising sanatoria to one asbestos plant, and he will see that even a quadrupled edition will not repay him for the loss of their insertions year in and year out!" Meanwhile, too, a council is instantly called by the Cotton Planters Association. A silly doctor, it seems, thinks he has discovered that handkerchiefs are responsible for the spread of tuberculosis and the nosey magazines will soon be wanting to feature him. If there are to be no linen handkerchiefs, what will become of the broad cotton-fields of the South! He must be kept from disseminating his perfectly fallacious theories. But now the Asbestos Trust, formed over night at the prospect of a limitless market, waits upon the editor — reinforced by the Sulphur Trust, which has also grasped the fact that sulphur will now enter a million homes denied to it before. Together they demand that the editor give widest publicity to a discovery so priceless to

humanity, or they will back a competing periodical on a larger scale than ever before attempted and run him out of business. Even Mark Twain might be moved to pity by the predicament of the poor editor.

But positive implications are not the only sources of trouble; there are negative implications also. The sensitiveness of advertisers to all literature but their own is daily increasing. It has occasioned many delicate discriminations, and will occasion many more. (Here, too, the prudent historian must discard his facts and resort to extravaganzas.) Paste-um (Please observe, this is a fictitious name — there really *is* no such article!) may proclaim in the most pointed terms the injuriousness of coffee, yet no writer may confess to one heart-beat the less through indulgence in the cup that cheers but enervates, without protest from coffee firms. No heroine may proudly voice the superiority of hot-water heating over steam, as do the ladies in the advertising pages, or shyly confide to her future lord that she will fry with clean cotton-seed oil instead of that nasty lard. This is all a part of that mysterious moral discrimination exhibited in wider realms,—by which, for instance, obscenities in prose become sanctities in verse, or things winked at in musical shows become blinked at in problem plays, or the ubiquitous union-suits of Commerce become Comstocked in art. But the discrimination though inexplicable is at least definite, and if one may not know what is what, he may at least memorise the where and when. Since psychology has become the handmaiden of business, however, advertisers are ceasing to be content to move in the old rut of simple prohibitions in the literary pages of magazines. An ounce of free suggestion is now seen to outweigh a pound of precept at space rates. Judged from a broad viewpoint, the refusal of heroines of high-class fiction to chew gum is damaging to the vested interests of some of our most prodigal advertisers; and authors must not be allowed to restrict the healthful habit to sales-ladies and office-boys.

Why should not the thousand cereal-foods unite in a common demand that no hero eat eggs for breakfast? — the hen does not advertise. All this is only a fancy picture — but if it be not now, yet it will come; the readiness is all.

This may, however, be for the best in the long run. As advertisers have made our numerous magazines possible, it may perhaps yet be owing to their sensitiveness and their widening vision that we shall reach final editorial emancipation from the fetich of editorial responsibility. Editors will find it physically impossible to figure out for themselves the manifold chances in each manuscript for possible disturbance to the hair-trigger mechanism of commerce, and after a time they will find it equally impossible to have each manuscript viséed by their entire advertising constituency and decide between the conflicting claims. Perhaps advertising, a Moses unaware, will yet lead out of the land of bondage the magazine which has done so much to promote. It is well to take a hopeful view. For this retrospect into the history of editorial responsibility must have demonstrated how firmly fixed is the notion in the editorial mind. Not until the editor is rigidly edited by the advertiser does it seem that it can be uprooted.

What with alterations of editors for æsthetic reasons, for moral reasons, for their own commercial reasons, and for the commercial reasons of advertisers, the periodical writers of the nineteenth century have continuously quavered one song, "Change and decay in all around I see," and unanimously longed for the editor that changéd not.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE END OF THE CENTURY

THE end of a century is undoubtedly society's most self-conscious period. (Just watch next time and see if there is not something about it that goes to the head!) It is to movements what New Year's Day preceded by Watch Night used to be to good Methodists — a time for retrospect, for self-searching, and for good resolutions. One looks before and after and pines for what is not. Whether a new broom sweeps clean or not depends upon the sweeper, but certainly it will always whisk up more dust. Then, too, the periodic discussion arising at this date as to just when the century ends only prolongs the crisis; it does not dissipate the excitement it produces. Just as some little boys take a month in getting ready for Christmas and a month in recovering from it, so society has a period of shake-up and shake-down in the closing decade of the old and the opening decade of the new century. It is perhaps fortunate that it comes no oftener than once in a hundred years.

So it proved in the history of American magazines. In this period two hundred and fifty thousand regular monthly buyers of periodicals became two millions, and the reader of one magazine became the devoted devourer of half a dozen and more. We are not, however, so much concerned with his New Year resolutions as with the various factors which caused him to make them. Chief of all (how horrid to find it was nothing more spiritual!) was their new cheapness. The honour for bringing this about was afterwards hotly contested, and Mr. Walker of the *Cosmopolitan* always maintained that his plans



were betrayed by a printer (as Benjamin Franklin claimed his had been with the first magazine) to Mr. McClure and to Mr. Munsey. Thus the record reads at any rate: *McClure's Magazine* appeared May 28, 1893, at fifteen cents a copy; the *Cosmopolitan* in July at twelve and a half; *Munsey's* in September at ten cents. As of these three, Mr. Frank A. Munsey was first in the publishing field, let us take his story up first. Here is an abstract of it, as he delivered it in a speech at a dinner given to his staff in 1907, the twenty-fifth anniversary of his entrance into the magazine world.

The *Argosy*, a juvenile weekly, began life in December, 1882. I had four thousand dollars in prospect and forty dollars in cash; one room for an office, an eight-dollar table, two wooden chairs, and an ink-bottle. My plans had all gone wrong, and I was lucky to find, at last, a publisher who agreed to bring it out and retain me as editor and manager. It failed in five months. I borrowed three hundred dollars; and as editor, advertising manager, office-boy, and chief contributor, I began to try to pump life into it. It had made its regular appearance for some years before I could procure any credit with which to advertise. Then I spent in five months ninety-five thousand dollars in advertising it. All the while writing at midnight my six thousand words a week. Success came, or rather what I thought was success until I found out my mistake; but beyond a certain point I could not lift the circulation. I assumed that the trouble was with a juvenile publication; and decided to demonstrate it by getting into the adult class. Consequently I started, early in 1889, *Munsey's Weekly*, the predecessor of the magazine. It lasted two and a half years and lost over one hundred thousand dollars. I made up my mind that a weekly was "a dead cock in the pit." There are a few successes to-day, but I think they are accounted for by the activity and fertility of the business office rather than by a genuine and spontaneous circulation. The weekly paper, once so great a feature in American publishing business, began to decline with the incoming of the big Sunday newspaper; where there is no Sunday newspaper in Europe, the weekly still thrives. After many experiments with the make-up of the *Argosy*, I had concluded that nothing would save it and that it must be moulded on other lines. I have never thought it terrible to change a publication as often as conditions warranted, or to make the change as radical as I pleased. I did not know yet what to do with the *Argosy*, but in 1891 I changed *Munsey's Weekly* into *Munsey's Magazine*. The

change of a worthless weekly into a monthly may not seem much, but it was this change which made the magazine the leading factor in modern publishing. I launched it at twenty-five cents and at this price ran it for two years, while I studied the problem why out of eighty millions of people there were not over two hundred and fifty thousand magazine buyers. Was the Sunday paper crushing the life out of the monthlies as well as the weeklies? I began to analyse the magazines. They seemed made for anæmics and their editors editing for themselves and not for their subscribers. Living in an artificial literary world, they got out publications which wofully lacked human interest. On the other hand, the Sunday newspapers appealed to everybody; and their price was five cents against five and seven times that for the magazines. The several attempts to float cheaper ones had been only weak copies of the old kind. I became convinced that both the price and the magazines were wrong for a wide circulation. If a magazine should be published at ten cents, and made light, bright, and timely, it might be a different story. I worked out my idea and took it to the American News Company. They did not relish it, said the scheme did not leave them a sufficient margin of profit for handling it. The price they finally offered was so low it would have throttled me. No one had ever succeeded in circulating a magazine over their heads, but I decided to try it. I would deal directly with the newsdealers of the country. No human being except myself believed I could win out. I had no money and men with plenty of it had failed. But I thought that it wasn't money which would win the fight, but the idea of giving the people what they wanted and giving it to them at the right price. God only knows how I managed it; I don't. I sent out ten thousand circulars to newsdealers telling them of the change to ten cents and telling them that they could not get the magazine through the News Company. I asked them to send their orders direct to me. I hoped and expected there would be orders. None came. Then the American News Company called on me and held out the olive branch. When I had been negotiating with them, I had told them they could have the magazine at six and a half cents; but when they had kept silence for three weeks, I advanced the price to seven. What had caused them to call upon me was this new price and something I never suspected. They had received orders from the whole ten thousand dealers! I had an edition of twenty thousand and no visible means of distributing it, but I refused the price they now offered. They must come to my terms. As the day of issue swept nearer, my tension increased to the breaking-point. But that issue was distributed in ten days, and I doubled it before the month was up! In the issue I had begun

those "plain talks to the people," now so customary; and I had something to talk about. Six months afterwards, I changed the *Argosy* to an adult magazine—its fifth change in eleven years. But it had one more change to undergo. In 1896 it became an all-fiction magazine, a type which it created and which has since become one of the most successful in the field. It became the second largest magazine in the world in point of circulation and of earning power. *Munsey's* is the first (1907). My six magazines—or rather seven, as one is issued in two sections—are all the result of my analysis of the situation in 1893. If there has been any luck about it, I do not know where it comes in. It was a fight all along the line.

Fortunate, too, is the historian in having, to fall back upon, Mr. S. S. McClure's own account of his activities. These summarise a period of expansion and revolution which makes, by contrast, the mild innovation of the journals of Opinion seem but the first faint stirrings of life and all previous circulations but premonitory ripples of a great flood.

For three summers, Mr. McClure says in his autobiography, he peddled coffee-pots in the Middle West, and gained thereby a very close acquaintance with the people of the small towns and the farming communities—the people who afterwards bought *McClure's Magazine*. All these people, he found, were interested in exactly the same things or the same kind of things that interested him. Thus, in after years, he had little sympathy with the distinction made by some editors—"This or that was very good, but it wouldn't interest the people of the Middle West or of the small towns." These, like the people of New York or Boston, were interested in whatever was interesting; and as he felt himself to be a fairly representative Middle-Westerner, they would be interested in whatever interested him. His associate-editor, Mr. John Phillips, and his business-manager had both been on a college paper with him in Illinois; and thus it may be admitted that the Ohio Valley would not regard the new magazine as an exotic.

The *Century* he thought was typographically far and away the best American periodical, and when he came to

get out the *Wheelman* for the Pope Manufacturing Company, it much resembled a thinner edition of his ideal. After a while Colonel Pope decided to buy the *Outing* and merge his periodical into it, and Mr. McClure thought the combination wouldn't work very well for him. He left and went into the *Century* office, then the uttermost limit of his ambition. But here one day he had a higher vision. A newspaper syndicate service was in the air at the time — indeed, the *New York Sun* had already made a tentative experiment in that direction — and Mr. McClure worked out a plan for one. When he started to put it into operation, he found the editors as cool about the project as the authors had been warm. Finally, however, he persuaded several important newspapers to take the service, of stories and articles, at eight dollars a week. For a long time after he inaugurated it, his actual capital was the money he owed authors. The older editors regarded the project with some anxiety — they all believed that there would never be any new magazines in the world, that *Harper's* and *Century* and the *Atlantic* would consume all the stories that would ever be written in America, and consequently there would not be enough to go around if he went on using them up in his syndicate. It was about eight years after he had founded the business that he began seriously to consider founding a magazine. The success of the *Ladies' Home Journal* at ten cents made him think a cheap popular magazine might thrive; and the new development of photo-engraving had just made such a scheme feasible. The impregnability of the older magazines was largely due to the costliness of wood-engraving. Only an established publication with a large working capital could afford illustrations made by that process. The *Century*, when he was working for it, used to spend something like five thousand dollars a month on its engraving alone. Not only was the new process vastly cheaper but it enabled a publisher to make pictures directly from photographs which were cheap, instead of drawings which were expensive.

Early in 1892, Mr. McClure continues, he and Mr. Phillips began active plans to launch a new fifteen cent monthly. After eight years of the hardest kind of work in the syndicate business, he was only \$2,800 ahead; important rivals had appeared, and the only practical expansion was in the direction of a magazine. Their entire capital was \$7,300. But in place of capital, they had a great fund of material to draw from. The magazine at first was to be made entirely of reprints of the most successful stories and articles that had been used in the Syndicate, and for a year or two it would have to live on what profits the Syndicate afforded.

The outlook was not promising, but it proved worse than he feared. For just before the first number came the great panic. They could collect no money from the newspapers for their service; and in the general cut-down of running expenses everywhere, a luxury like stories and articles was one of the first things the newspapers dispensed with. Of the twenty thousand copies printed for the first number, twelve thousand were returned to them. The eight thousand they sold netted them only \$600, and the paper and printing had cost thousands. Then the next month another woe trod upon the heels of the first. The *Cosmopolitan* cut to twelve and a half cents, two and a half under *McClure's*. They had reckoned that it might be a year before another cheap magazine came into the field. Nevertheless, though always on the edge of failure, they got through the hard winter somehow. The next summer they were losing a thousand a month. By cutting the text from ninety-six to eighty-eight pages and reducing the size of the illustrations, they reduced the loss somewhat; but all the while they were slipping back.

In this crisis Conan Doyle, Miss Ida Tarbell, and Napoleon tided them over. The first volunteered to lend them some money, and the second wrote a life of the third. The year 1894 was a Napoleon year; the *Century* had announced Professor Sloan's *Life of Napoleon*; the *Cosmopolitan* soon joined the combat; and Mr. McClure

commissioned Miss Tarbell overnight to run down to Washington and whip up a biography to go with a remarkable collection of portraits he had found there. Miss Tarbell had just written, in Paris, her careful studies of the life of Madame Roland, and knew the period. The Middle West proved more interested in the stop-gap than in the *Century's* Life which had been some years in making; and it doubled the circulation of *McClure's* within a few months. But Miss Tarbell as a circulation-maker was only just flexing her capable fingers. Quite as casually and quickly, Mr. McClure decided that some new portraits she had found of Lincoln needed a framework, and she winnowed the interested Middle West for anecdotal material. Napoleon had brought their subscribers from forty to eighty thousand; Lincoln increased them from one hundred and twenty in August, 1895, to two hundred and fifty in December. Thus in thirty months they reached a circulation in excess of the *Century*, *Harper's*, and *Scribner's*; and soon they were to be greater than all three combined. The only fly in their ointment was the old advertising rate. With their increased circulation, they were losing four thousand dollars a month. Peace hath its defeats the same as war! But in 1896 they had changed all that, and were clearing five thousand a month.

Reviewing the earlier history of the magazine, Mr. McClure thinks that the intimate and human note which went straight to the Middle West heart was struck in the very first number. The Real Conversations — in which distinguished persons interviewed distinguished persons — and the Human Documents — in which the portraits of the same proceeded by consecutive stages from the cradle to the grave — converted, for the Middle West, mere names into near neighbours. Their popular science articles, he thinks, were of a more serious nature than those in any preceding magazine. The wide acquaintance with writers and their possibilities which the Syndicate had given him seemed to him his chief asset and his real

capital; furthermore, he could, with syndicate and magazine combined, tempt them with a wider publicity than they had ever received before. His industry was untiring; for a series of portraits of Bismarck he ran over to Germany. As boundless was his fertility in devising new schemes to conduct personally to Middle Western farmyards remote aristocrats. (Holmes wrote to Mrs. Stuart Phelps Ward in 1893 that he would be delighted to discuss "Time and Eternity" with her and her husband as suggested, but as to saying anything on those subjects to be reported, he would as soon send a piece of his spinal marrow to those omnivorous editors. "So you see, I am quite obstinate—not to be lured or *Mac-lured*.") As for stories, he had, in addition to Conan Doyle, captured Kipling and Anthony Hope also. To discover the value of all three, one might not, perhaps, need to go so far as to sell coffee-pots in the Middle West, yet Mr. McClure says that *Harper's* had refused every tale in the four early books of Kipling, that it took him a year in the Syndicate to gain recognition for Conan Doyle, and that no American editor had thought enough of Hope to bring him across the water.

The special character of the American cheap magazine as we now know it—wrote that keen and reflective English observer, Mr. William Archer, in 1910—is mainly due to one man, Mr. S. S. McClure. He invented and developed the particular type. The style of article which has made its fame is a richly documented, soberly worded study in contemporary history, concentrating into ten or twelve pages matter which could much more easily be expanded into a book ten or twelve times as long. Its method is to present, without sensationalism or exaggeration, facts skilfully marshalled and sternly compressed, and let them speak for themselves. Here is Mr. McClure's account of the inception and evolution of the type:

About 1897 the talk about trusts had become important and the common people took a threatening attitude toward them—and without much knowledge. We decided that the way to

handle the trust question was not by taking the matter up abstractly, but to take one trust and to give its history, its effects, and its tendencies. The mother of trusts was the Standard Oil. Miss Tarbell had lived for years in the heart of the oil region, and she undertook to prepare some articles on its history. When they heard of our project, Mr. H. H. Rogers of the Standard Oil sent us word through his friend Mark Twain that they would gladly help us in securing material. Miss Tarbell spent nearly three years on the work before the first chapter of it was printed. The first important result of the articles was the nation-wide realisation that the railroad rebate was the great weapon of the Standard Oil. Simultaneously began the articles of Mr. Steffens on municipal misgovernment. We gave him a roving commission, and he visited the cities. What he found made me begin an investigation which proved that life and property in the United States were less secure than in other countries. I went on trying to arouse public opinion. Steffens's work dealing with the corruption of State and city politics was a feature of the magazine for three or four years. His articles were the first accurate studies of this nature that had then appeared in an American magazine. To secure the accuracy which alone makes such studies of value, I had to invent a new method in magazine journalism. The fundamental weakness of modern journalism was that the highly specialised activities of civilisation were very generally reported by uninformed men, and what experts had to say was seldom interesting. I decided to pay my writers for their study rather than for their copy—to put them on a salary and let them master their subjects before they wrote about them. The preparation of the fifteen articles of the Standard Oil series took five years; they were produced at the rate of three a year, and each one cost us two thousand dollars. Of course, the subjects that will repay an editor for so expensive a method are few and important.

Thus the origin of what was later called the muck-raking movement came from no formulated plan to attack existing institutions, but from wishing to take up with accuracy and thoroughness some of the problems that were beginning to interest people. The method of dealing with public questions which distinguished *McClure's* was developed gradually. My desire to handle such questions came largely, I think, from my frequent trips abroad. In my many rapid trips for material of all kinds, I had noticed certain differences in the attitude of people here and abroad regarding public service and the connection between business interests and government. I was desirous of finding out why, in American cities as distinguished from American States, the debasing and debased part of the population should



have a predominating influence in nominating and electing officials. A study of the methods of organising governments in England and Germany made me understand the basic causes of the inefficiency and corruption of governments in American cities. It was the indifference of the average American citizen to public questions.

The spirit which actuated all this may be illustrated by a *McClure* editorial, January, 1903. "We did not plan it so; it is a coincidence that this number contains three arraignments of American character such as should make every one of us stop and think. The Shame of Minneapolis, the current chapter of the Standard Oil, Mr. Ray Stannard Baker's *The Right to Work*, it might all have been called *The American Contempt of Law*. Capitalists, workingmen, politicians, citizens — all breaking the law or letting it be broken. Who is there left to uphold it? The lawyers? Some of the best are hired for that very purpose. The judges? Too many of them so respect it that for some error or quibble they restore to office or liberty men convicted on evidence overwhelmingly convincing to common sense. The churches? We know of one, an ancient and wealthy establishment, which had to be compelled by a Tammany hold-over health-officer to put its tenements in sanitary condition. The colleges? They do not understand. There is no one left — none but all of us." Where could one find more meaning, more control, more passion packed in so few words! It was not to be expected that the novelty of a magazine campaign on corruption, both contemporary and specified, could intrude itself into a jolted community without opposition. As frequently happens in this amusing world, a proposed reform makes strange bed-fellows. The outcry against *McClure's* delightfully anticipated the pretty spectacle, a decade later, of the well-supported matron and the well-supported cadet uniting against woman's suffrage. Alike the matronly *New York Evening Post* and Tammany denounced the articles as altogether commercial. The latter called the campaign a mercenary defamation of the fair name of our glorious land; the former

(equally, though more wittily, reminiscent of time-worn oratory) called it a fight for God, for country, and for circulation. Godkin and Curtis and Dr. Holland in their long and admirable agitation in their magazines for Civil Service Reform, had really gone the limit of safe and well-bred magazine interference with public affairs—to attack *specific* institutions and mention *names* was to drag in the dust the white samite of literary journalism! And from the White House came ringing the customary picturesque epithet, with which its occupant, agog like Kipling for the galvanizing word, was in the habit of branding all mavericks. *McClure's* wore proudly its new and sanctioned title of Muck Raker, and doubtless joined in the chuckle which went up from many earnest-minded Americans and observing Englishmen after their first gasp of indignation. For the accusation, ungracious as it was from one professional reformer to another, was conspicuously ungrateful also. It was the public conscience which *McClure's* had striven so earnestly to arouse with an army of shocking facts that eagerly seized upon the President for leadership. "The historian of the future," wrote Mr. Archer, "may determine how much of the 'uplift' that distinguished the Roosevelt administration was due to the influence of the *McClure* type of magazine. It seems to me certain that Mr. McClure paved the way for President Roosevelt and potently furthered the movements with which his name will always be identified."

Not the least of the services of the *McClure* type of article was its contribution to the final demise of the Young Person. More and more ailing as the old century drew to its close, this fragile and exquisite illusion apparently entered her last stage at the commencement of the new. For the family-circle was to be startled with ruder accents than the *McClure* Shame of the Cities or the *Cosmopolitan* Treason of the Senate. Young ladies had no sooner heard that politicians and policemen slipped into the saloon on the next block than they were ac-

quainted with the hitherto unsuspected tidings that it had a Family Entrance into which other beings slipped. And such revolutionary disclosures came not only from the militant magazines of which no fine sense of the sanctity of the Young Person could be expected, but even from the *Ladies' Home Journal* (Shades of Ruth Ashmore!). Made deaf at last by all this noise to the elegant reticence becoming a daughter of Mrs. Hale and *Godey's Ladies' Book*, this periodical actually began to give parents instruction upon certain aspects of the education of their children! What would dear old *Knickerbocker* have said? He would probably have said that he could have told you so; that *he* knew what was coming the moment a gentlemanly magazine so far forgot itself as to ventilate opinions. The next step in the inevitable degeneration would, of course, be the ventilation of vices! No opinions at table and no ugly facts before the Young Person were the cornerstones of Society-as-it-Should-be. An amusing anecdote or so with the wine and cigars, and later a farce from the French dexterously diluted of course for female companions but patent to the cognoscenti — you could banish her from the one and as for the other, why every Young Person, thank heaven, had an innate purity! Indeed, in a sense and with all humility, the Young Person, one might say, was the noblest work of God and man alike! Man had been His co-worker in this perfected being which had eyes but saw not and ears but heard not.— So might Knick have said, shaking his silvery locks over the departure of all civility from a degenerate world. Well, thanks to *McClure's*, there are no longer any Young Persons. Nor will it console any one who grieves to reflect that there never were any. It was all so charming. Nor will it console them to hear the opinion of that obsessed Mr. Archer, admiring American magazines for a frankness of speech which the English ones do not possess. “It is one of the striking features of the magazine of the *McClure* type that that though distinctly ‘family’ productions so far as fiction

is concerned, they deal freely with social topics of the utmost delicacy, without either frightening their subscribers off or achieving any 'success of scandal.' I have never seen an article in *McClure's* or in any magazine of its class that was not perfectly fit to be read by any one who could conceivably wish to read it."

There is a reason economic and a reason temperamental, Mr. Archer thinks, why there are no such articles in English magazines. They have neither the circulation nor the advertisements which would enable them to pay for such social investigation. But the main reason is the English law of libel. An American editor said to him quite simply, "We carry libels in every number"; but the mildest of the progressive American cheap magazines would beget in England a crop of libel-suits. For the *McClure* type eschewed the generalities which preceding moralists had exclusively engaged in, and mentioned names and cases. The difference between a moralist and a muck-raker is a simple but significant one — a muck-raker is a moralist who specifies. Mr. Archer remarks that the law of libel seems to be as inefficient in America as it is over-efficient in England; but the contrast is not so much legal as spiritual — an American shrugs his shoulders at an accusation which in England would blast a man's whole career. "We do not wish to spend our energy," said *Collier's Weekly*, "in exploiting facts which cannot personally offend a human being"; yet if you do offend and the person has money enough to go to court in England, a libel-suit follows. It is not because Americans are more afraid of libel-suits, for judges here as in England could exclude the damaging evidence if that were our attitude. Partly it is an un-British indifference to our reputation and partly it is an equally un-British sense of humour. Where everybody is illegally libelling everybody else, 'tis folly to be squeamish. For the same reason, Americans are not even exacting of their pound of flesh; what's the sense of being a Shylock when the next time the other party may have you on the hip? Mr.

John Adams Thayer says that once when *Everybody's* made a plate of J. P. Morgan from a steel-engraving, they found the copyright law allowed the original publisher to claim one dollar a copy for every impression they had made. The publisher pranced over to see them, and they had a most interesting afternoon. They were liable for seven hundred thousand dollars!

The new process of photo-engraving made possible the cheap illustrated magazine; but as in a short time many cheap magazines were in the market, it by no means accounted for the enormous circulation of a magazine like *McClure's*. Illustrations that cost one hundred dollars and required a month's time could now be had by all of them for ten dollars and in one day. "The revolution in the art of engraving, not to say its destruction," said the *Independent* editorially in 1895, "is threatening a change in the conduct of monthly magazines as well as of newspapers. It seems probable, however, that the higher-priced magazines will not find it wise to reduce their price to the figure of *Cosmopolitan* and *McClure's*. They will wish to maintain that higher, purer literary standard which succeeds in securing the best but not the most numerous readers. They cannot change their constituency beyond the comparatively cultivated class that appreciates them. They cannot therefore enormously increase their circulation and so their advertising income by reducing their price." To which *McClure's* replied: "Less than one-seventh of the illustrations in last month's *Harper's*, *Century*, *Scribner's* are engraved on wood. There must be some merit besides cheapness in a method that is employed for more than six-sevenths of the high-priced monthlies. On the other hand, we must seek elsewhere for a reason for the cheap magazine. Will the editor of the *Independent* tell us where any editor can secure a higher, purer literary standard than is maintained by our list of writers?" The list that followed included most of the names before the English-speaking public. Thus it was apparent that the difference in standards was not

one of height but of kind. Anybody who wished might call it purer, anybody who wished might call it less conventional. It was not a difference of so-called appeal to pure culture, for *McClure's* and *Cosmopolitan* each had a notable art series. It was not even a difference in editorial enterprise or in careful and costly research. The *Century*, some while before the era of cheap magazines, had sent George Kennan and an artist on a two years' tour of Siberia to secure the articles on Russian prisons and the treatment of political exiles which caused the proscription of that magazine from the Czar's dominions. The travel articles of *Harper's*, for which it had long been famous, had despatched observers with pen and pencil to the outposts of the world. The difference between the two sets of magazines simply consisted in the fact that the majority of the American people thought the *McClure* type moved closer to contemporary life and was seeking not only to illumine but to raise and support. The cheap magazine in itself was no new idea. In 1872 and in conservative Boston a ten cent periodical, *American Homes*, was started and was making a national success when the Boston Fire destroyed it utterly. The new tone of intimacy and neighbourly helpfulness which became the special characteristic of the cheap magazines and to which even some of the older high-priced periodicals "lowered their dignity" as time went on, seems to have been introduced by that mighty mother of magazines, the *City of Brotherly Love*, as she got her third wind. Mrs. Hale of *Godey's* had whispered cosily in the female ear, *Graham's* had chucked a continent under the chin; but it remained for the *Ladies' Home Journal* to embrace warmly the universal world.

Established in 1883 by Cyrus Curtis, it was edited for half a dozen years by his wife under the name of Mrs. Louisa Knapp. But its astounding success began about 1890 with the advent of Mr. E. W. Bok. Before this time the occupation of an editorial chair had been accomplished without shaking the earth. But the Himalayas

heard at once that he was the youngest and highest-paid editor in America. He immediately began that series of novel series which effected the introduction of everybody to everybody else and placed the two hemispheres on a family basis. He did not go forth to the family-circle as the mid-century *Harper's* had done; he inscribed the circle around himself like Richelieu holding the maiden Julie. Nobody could step outside of it unless he stepped off the planet. Unknown Wives of Well-Known Men, Unknown Husbands, Famous Daughters of Famous Men, How I Wrote This and Did That — everybody who was somebody and everybody who was nobody were soon engaged in counting his or her pulse-beats to a breathless world and to the tune of the periodical's increasing circulation. One touch of Mr. E. W. Bok had made the whole world kin. It seemed as if the possibilities of the genre might never be exhausted, and the public might go on clamouring forever, or until the Nieces of Absconding Bank-Presidents and the Cousins of Royal Governesses had satisfied the last urgency for world-fellowship in the latest Bok-awakened Madagascar metropolis. The fever for fellowship spent itself in time, of course; but the two-fold result upon the conduct of magazines seems likely to be permanent. Readers expect buttonholing if not manhandling, and editors have come out of their cloistered retirement. Even editors of some of the older magazines which prided themselves on being far from the madding crowd no longer desire to remain violets by their mossy stones. As for the editors of the new cheap magazines, they looked upon Mr. Bok and at once did likewise. Personal publicity became the proof of aggressiveness and enterprise. It was part of the advertising age. About the time when "Charles Frohman Presents" and "Henry Savage Proffers" became household phrases conned by lisping children from the billboards of America, Mr. Munsey was publishing in his own handwriting his own opinion of his magazine as a cover-design. A few years later even Mr. Alden of *Harper's* was protesting in the

*North American* that the wise editor never sought to suppress originality and that if the Middle West wanted to call him a matron he didn't mind. As for the militant magazines, they vibrated with an electric current sped from editor to reader, wherein dynamo called to dynamo in no uncertain tones.

All this was much increased by the vogue of the cult magazine, which by its very nature was a personal utterance. The cult magazines were all slender things, merely embodied voices like that pocket prima-donna who was once heralded as "Little but Oh My!" The run of these was a measles with which the face of the whole country broke out. The germ-carrier was the project of two Harvard youths who published while at Cambridge a slim, artistically printed semi-monthly called the *Chap Book*. It was a side-product of the Celtic Revival in England, and purposed extending to Victorianised America the new wine of the *Yellow Book*, of Aubrey Beardsley, George Moore, and Yeats. In a short while all the early numbers were exhausted, and its deserved success was so great that it moved to Chicago where it would have freer air and no time-stained institutions standing in the way of its sunlight. There it flourished for four years; and as it remained a substantial and literary rarity until the last, its fortuitous death was universally regretted. So was the death of its first joyous offspring, the *Lark*, which twittered gleefully at San Francisco from 1895 to 1897. This stopped, apparently, because its editors — Les Jeunes — wanted to grow up. Some of them afterward did grave and valuable things in periodical literature, but many of the carols of their light-hearted infancy were such melodious madness that the world gladly stopped to listen. The *Chap Book* had numerous progeny, however, that would have scorned to be brother to the *Lark* as much as to own so conventional a parentage as the new Irish movement in an effete literature. All over the country they sprang up, by preference on rocky soil and where weeds might choke them. The intention of the



cult magazine was to be a voice crying in the wilderness. There were at least one hundred and sixty-two of them, crying to the flinty echoes "Repent! Repent!" and living on locusts until their lungs gave out, though from want of proper food only. Chief of them was the *Philistine*, Printed Every Little While for the Society of the Philistines. This was an association of Book Lovers and Folks Who Write and Paint. Their object was to destroy the phantom of a false dawn, and their settling at East Aurora, New York, was thought by many to have been the result of exploring the map for a village of symbolic name. "In literature he is a Philistine who seeks to express his personality in his own way," ran an early announcement. "We ask for the widest, freest, and fullest liberty for Individuality — that's all." This proved both wide and full, and it made free with every established Thing. Begun among the earliest of the fadazines, it alone continued its voice well into the next century. Its voice was robust. Its sub-title was A Periodical of Protest, and it is admitted that one cannot protest in a whisper. Its editor, Elbert Hubbard, did more, though in a field less wide, than Mr. Bok or Mr. McClure or Mr. Munsey to deal the editorial tradition of reticence a body blow; to develop that arrestingly and grippingly personal tone which was becoming characteristic of the American sanctum, and to demolish the last vestige of the pose which Boston culture had bequeathed American letters. The only one of the four who had any literary gift, who went on lecture tours, and was the fortunate possessor of a disputed personality, his voice naturally carried the furthest. A cult is like a protoplasm — it subdivides while you are looking at it; and the *Philistine*, like all the other little magazines, died because its offspring ate up the available audience. But their earnest iconoclasm made many people do some thinking of their own, and they were yeasty affairs which leavened a vast deal of our inherited stodginess; they had their day and went their way and left some thoughts behind them. In

the history of American thought they are consequently of considerable importance, but to the history of the American magazine they contributed chiefly one more factor in the growth of the personal note at the end of the century.

A case very much in point is the gradual emergence of Mr. John Brisben Walker of the *Cosmopolitan*, from a private citizen conducting a business enterprise into the fierce light that beats upon a throne. Born in Rochester, New York, in 1886, a clergyman's child, the *Cosmopolitan*, as befitted its parent, was conservative and domestic. Consisting largely of translations and with full page reproductions of paintings, it had a Children's and a Household Department which often gave recipes. (Can you picture the contemporary *Cosmopolitan* thus parentally engaged, even if fathers of families are not what they were?) In the beginning, it threw in as an extra inducement to those impervious to the seductions of a home missionary at two dollars and a half a year, a Letter and Bill File, the cost price of which was only twenty-five cents less. But its Cincinnatus days departed in its second year when it moved to the metropolis, and its sea-change was complete when Mr. Walker coming from the West stumbled over it in 1889. Somewhat later it made an attempt to recapture its rurality by moving out of town again, but dalliance with the great city had forever altered its ancient Rochestrian ideals. Having put its hand to the plough, it turned back to the sidewalk. But this was later still, and under the convoy of Mr. Hearst — whose energetic and sophisticated personality is, geographically considered, perhaps even more remote from the magazine's first parent than was that of its second. As a matter of statistics, however, it may not be generally known that Mr. Hearst is a clergyman twice removed; or that the *Cosmopolitan* once dispensed recipes on the best methods of keeping the household sweet and clean.

But to return to Mr. Walker and the far side of the century mile-stone, when the worldly career of the future

magazine was as yet undreamed. The new editor made haste discreetly. He replaced the Household Department with one on Social Problems conducted by Edward Everett Hale (ominous forecast of the Suffrage movement!) and the Children's Department with Book Reviews by Professor Brander Matthews (fitting symbol of the discarded parochial past!); and added the departments *In the World of Arts and Letters*, and *The Progress of Science*, conducted by many hands. These were all admirably administered, and the last-mentioned was particularly serviceable in bringing the readers closer to contemporary activities. Contenting itself for a while, too, with articles illustrated by portraits and other documentary records — like the *Lady Riders of Washington* or *The Woman's Press Club of New York* — it little by little branched out into other illustrative fields. Its early reproduction of famous masterpieces happily metamorphosed into richly illustrated articles on *Recent Art*. About the year 1897, the magazine reviewed its ten years of life. At its birth, the total number of magazines did not greatly exceed the figures of the present edition. The rapid increase in circulation had proceeded in equal steps with the manifestation of a new attitude of a magazine toward its readers. It considered itself a co-operative affair in which the chief party was the public. Mr. Howells and A. S. Hardy were associate-editors and Professor Boyesen and Dr. Hale were regular contributors and advisers, but the best associate and adviser was the reader himself. As with the other magazines which in the last decade of the century reduced their price, this endowment of the public with a personality it had never before possessed was found to have its editorial exactions. Whether the flattered reader required reciprocity or felt that at least propriety demanded that he demand it, or whether the necessities of the new appeal to social and civic consciousness dictated greater directness (for how can one receive an actual punch from an invisible shoulder?), or whether it be that heartier fellowship is inherent

in lowered prices and in the poorer class in general, or whether it was all a part of that new world-note of genial camaraderie inaugurated by the *Ladies' Home Journal* which caused the public to clamour for the countenances of the makers of its shoes and its talcum powders — let it be for psychologists to decide. At any rate Mr. Walker, like the rest, was no longer satisfied to be seen through a glass darkly; and, as with the rest, the new face-to-faceness was startling to conservatives. The vestibule of his magazine became his inner holy of holies — whence heart-to-heart confessions of the policies and material within doors issued in crisp sermonettes in large print. It had become the fashion. But those who had followed Mr. Walker's widening vision were not surprised to see him identify himself with an attempt to construct an international language. The founder of the magazine had not projected an all-world parish. Mr. Walker offered the President of the United States twelve thousand dollars to cover the expenses of a commission to report on the idea; and when President Harrison finally decided that it did not come within the limits of his jurisdiction, the *Cosmopolitan* undertook it single-handed.

The new attitude of social obligation, taken by *McClure's* and the *Cosmopolitan* toward the end of the century, may perhaps be best illustrated by the magnificent though abortive attempt of the latter to found a national university. In August, 1897, this announcement appeared:

For five years we have published the magazine at a reduced price, which the publishing world regarded as a step certain to result in failure. It was an educational movement of far-reaching importance. We have now arrived at another stage in the evolution of the magazine. We enlarge our sphere, and take in hand the organisation to provide for the intellectual necessities of those who seek enlightenment and growth, and yet have not had the means for entering the universities. The *Cosmopolitan University* will provide a course of studies worked out with reference to the real needs of men and women in the various walks of life; designed to produce broader minds, and give greater fitness for special lines of work, and also to make

better citizens, better neighbours, and happier men and women. At the head of the organisation will be placed an educational mind of the first ability. All instruction blanks, examination papers, official circulars free. No charge of any kind will be made to the student, all expenses will be borne for the present by the *Cosmopolitan*. No conditions, except a pledge of a given number of hours of study. Work is to be formally begun in October.

It proved an electrifying announcement. A month and a half after this statement — necessarily indefinite, the editor admitted, since plans had not yet been formulated — almost four thousand students had enrolled. In two weeks more, the number was almost six thousand; in another eight it had doubled. What was to be done with this vast horde of day-workers who desired to burn the midnight lamp! In the meantime had arisen other troubles beside that of feeding the multitude with limited loaves and fishes. President Andrews had just left Brown University on account of some differences of opinion between himself and the trustees, and Mr. Walker announced that the magazine had secured him to direct the *Cosmopolitan* University with a Board of Advisors. But now President Andrews had been requested by the trustees to withdraw his resignation, and he in turn felt himself compelled to ask Mr. Walker to release him. The change completely disarranged all their plans for organisation, and others must be worked out as speedily as possible. Meanwhile the students kept on mounting prodigiously; applications from all over the country swept toward Irvington-on-the-Hudson like a white tidal wave. The magazine had felt that the appropriation of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars which it was able to make, should be divided into annual instalments of thirty thousand each. They had regarded the sum as ample to support the institution for five years. But the number of applicants had made it entirely inadequate, and they were forced to ask that all students who were able to do so should pay a fee of five dollars per quarter. This did not daunt or even diminish the recruits, who cried aloud from

every remote hamlet for a college education by correspondence. By May the ambitious band had become nineteen thousand. Swamped, the magazine still floundered with the flood. Another thousand in August compelled the discarding of all former plans and the formation of new ones. But such emergencies had become normal by this time, and the magazine hoped that the experience of the first year — so unsatisfactory to their educational staff — would be of service in the second which it now undismayed began. At the end of that period, however, it threw up its hands. It would do what it could, but its means did not allow it to take care of the twentieth part of the applicants. The Government should establish a National Correspondence University, and it would present a bill to Congress to that effect.

It had been a magnificent and generous undertaking. Of course, the usual number of sedate periodicals whose cooler projects allowed no opportunity for failure, and that large body of persons who cannot believe in the sincerity of a philanthropist until he has bankrupted himself, saw in it only ingenious advertising. Elderly people found it but another manifestation of the deplorable stridency of cheap literature — one could not imagine the *Knickerbocker* doing such a thing. It was all a part of this end of the century chaos which had hurtled matrons and letters into the market-place! Perhaps more than anything else, even more than the articles of exposure inaugurated by *McClure's*, the Cosmopolitan University marked that the old ideal of a literary magazine was as dead as a dodo. It was an ideal derived from England and was embodied by the early *Knickerbocker* better than by any other successful American magazine not mainly of the review type, although possibly it might be found at its best in the short-lived *Arcturus*. Polite comment on polite affairs. Moncure Conway summed it up once in the early eighties, "An English magazine is a circular letter addressed by a scholarly man to a few hundred friends."

As this modest history of the magazines but aims to round off the century conveniently, it may not mention some of later birth. Nor may it follow the fortunes of *Everybody's* — born in 1899 under other auspices — except incidentally and as indicative of the new advertising movement. Some account of this is found in Mr. John Adams Thayer's life-story, Astir.

With a few notable exceptions editors do not make magazines financially successful. It is far more difficult to secure a capable advertising manager, and he will demand and probably receive twice the editor's salary. The business of my department, which had totalled a quarter of a million at my coming, had now a yearly volume of twice that amount. It was the hey-day of advertising. One day in the president's office I saw the architect's drawing of a massive stone edifice fourteen stories high, to be built for and devoted solely to the business of the Butterick Company. Facetiously the treasurer remarked, "Look at your new building!" As treasurer, he knew that my department had made it possible. When we bought the magazine property, the price of the advertising was \$150 a page — one dollar per page per thousand circulation being the recognised rate among general magazines, though an extra twenty or even fifty thousand is often given for good measure. With a showing of three hundred thousand now, we could ask \$300 a page, as we had doubled our circulation in a year. We stood upon this healthy footing when Frenzied Finance began to increase our circulation to the merry tune of fifty thousand copies a month.

To the innocent bystander, the adjective "healthy" may seem here to carry a peculiar implication. Does not health, he may query, increase as circulation increases? But the fact is, *Everybody's* was mortally threatened with a rush of blood to the stomach. The reader who resents his present serfdom to the advertiser will grimly appreciate the predicament. The magazine had fed itself up so, with its vital nourishment, that apoplexy threatened. (If that is a mixed figure, make the best of it!) The curious situation was startling in its modernity — to be dying of good health. But it was not absolutely novel for all that. Even before the old *Scribner's* had inaugurated the reign of the advertiser, the phenomenon

had been forecast. It was as early as 1865 and the place was Chicago, which at that period scorned advertising, in the most elegant and approved literary fashion. There, Mr. Fleming tells us, the *Little Corporal*, a juvenile, had made an unexpected hit. It proved the first Chicago periodical to attract national attention and the first juvenile in the country to be read by children everywhere. Its circulation grew to be enormous (its twelve numbers cost one dollar — almost the first genuine instance of low prices), but it came a cropper with its advertising. The advertisers, who at that early date were nearly always confined to local firms, refused to allow the rate to be increased; an out-of-town circulation, however large, is of no benefit to us, they said. With a small circulation there had been a profit at this low rate, but after a certain point every additional copy was printed at a loss. It was this same condition which threatened *Everybody's* when Lawson jumped the circulation; and it was met by increasing the selling price until the advertising contracts should expire and a higher rate could be arranged. The reader who resents the power of the advertiser will again grimly appreciate the symbolic nature of the solution. It is always the Ultimate Consumer that pays, he may mutter wearily — as at present he picks his vexed way from gobbet to gobbet of text through the welter of advertising matter; and as, from page nineteen to page thirty-two to page forty-seven to page sixty-three the moving finger turns and, having read, turns on.

“In less than a year,” says Mr. Thayer, “we announced on one occasion an edition of one million. The demand for back numbers was incessant; and we printed a little pamphlet called *The Chapters That Went Before*. Mr. Lawson had worked a miracle in the circulation, and we beheld the wonderful vision of becoming a great magazine property without the long hard preparatory struggle of a *Munsey* or a *McClure*. But so enormous an increase in copies without a corresponding increase in advertising rates meant ruin. We finally decided, contrary to cus-



tom, to announce an immediate increase without notice to \$400 a page, and later we established a \$500 rate. Then we decided if we would meet the circulation we must raise the price to fifteen cents a copy. To raise the subscription price of a magazine is an important step, and when to make the change was the problem. The attorney for H. H. Rogers of Standard Oil fame suddenly wrote the American News Company, that if they distributed our magazines and put them on sale, he would begin an action at law. I saw this was the moment, and the free advertising given us by the Standard Oil was so immense that the edition though large was swept from the news-stands on the day of publication."

Unique in every way was Mr. Lawson's series of articles. Twice blessed is he who, getting all, gives nothing. When Mr. Lawson finally made up his mind to attack the evils of high finance (much assisted to his decision by the perseverance of the editor), he announced that it was his intention to do it for nothing and furthermore to advertise his articles in the newspapers at his own expense. What magazine could help but admire so thorough and so canny a reformer, who felt his motive must be as far above suspicion as gay-bird Cæsar thought his wife ought to be? He demanded only that *Everybody's* offer a prize of fifty thousand dollars for the best essay on Frenzied Finance at the end of its run; but, says Mr. Thayer naively, "we eventually persuaded him there were more effective ways of advertising." The end of the run found them normally issuing from five to six hundred thousand copies a month, and after it finished they retained the bulk of this circulation.

"While our first cover was not particularly artistic, it was different from all other magazine covers and caused comment by reason of its sentiment and novelty — it represented two hearts cut in a birch tree. The cover designs cost us much effort but they assisted the impression which promptly got abroad that *Everybody's* was different from the common run." Thus light-heartedly

does Mr. Thayer mention the inception of the stupidest feature of the cheap magazine — the candy-box cover. It is a picture in little of the fate that awaits all display-advertising. Fired by the example of *Everybody's* all the cheap magazines hastened to be "different" and ended in all becoming just alike — their old distinctive cover forgotten and their trademark destroyed. In this mad work of self-obliteration the high-priced magazines followed — only *Scribner's* being wise enough, in keeping her complexion through all changes of her adornment, to preserve her individuality. The cover-design Mr. Thayer refers to was attractive; and had they and the rest of the magazines contended themselves with the story-telling picture or one which had reference to some chief feature of the contents within, there would have been no objection — although not to be eternally confronted in the old magazines even with such covers is a welcome relief. The fancy cover had appeared timidly about 1896. The *Cosmopolitan* sported one of the earliest, but the novelty was apparently regarded with disfavour and soon disappeared. *McClure's* printed several of their Lincoln portraits during the run of the Lincoln articles, and also had printed portraits of several of their authors. This innovation was followed, conservatively, by symbolic female figures representing the months. Thus slowly the virus began until it had developed complete and rabid feminisation. In the meantime, within the covers of the cheap magazines a process of auto-intoxication was going on. The theatrical departments had become permanent fixtures, and the unending procession of actresses' portraits had got well under way. Then arrived the lamentable hour when no home was thought complete without a Christie or a Gibson girl. And then the deluge! The chorus-isation of the cheap magazine was complete, and the day of the artist model had dawned. With no other variety than that afforded by seasonable costume, characterless as wax dummies in store-windows, telling no other story than their own insipid prettiness, they sim-

pered incessantly and incongruously from the covers of magazines all sense and entertainment and serious endeavour within. Even the railroad and news-stand trade, whose jaded eye this eternal exploitation of cherry cheeks and rosy lips is doubtless meant to ensnare, must have shortly familiarised itself with all possible combinations of the female features. Few things in the publishing world are more depressing than those books for the Christmas trade wherein favourite artists gather together their magazine covers for the year in one awful record of smirking fatuity. We shall look back upon this exhibition of American taste with as much humiliation, diluted with humour, as upon our "lambrequin and drape" period. Here, if you please, is the magazine's one *fin de siècle* feature of the end of the century!

For the rest, what a record is that which American magazine literature presents to the twentieth century! Magazines have now become so numerous as to defy any account of them beyond mere classified enumeration. To this stage of easy support has America advanced through a century of short-lived attempts. There are nearly two thousand titles of incomplete and unfinished magazines which perished of starvation — and the list itself is incomplete, for the names of many gallant youngsters have been lost forever. The splendid endeavour is as significant of our intellectual and social vitality as is the splendid achievement. How they have broadened and enriched American life! What incalculable contribution have they made to the growth of human sympathy and companionship! Thanks to them, history will for the first time possess a complete record of human thought and activity. Thanks to them, men and women are enabled to live wiser and happier lives.

Nor does this tell the entire story. "I desire to confess frankly," writes Mr. H. M. Alden of *Harper's*, "that in literature the book and not the magazine is the supreme thing; but the first encouragement of the greatest writers has come from the magazine ever since the time of Poe,

and the magazine has been participant of such glory as literature has shown." That the magazine has a hundred times multiplied the audience of authors is apparent to everybody. Not so well understood is it that they have been of as great social as monetary value. They lifted the author to a recognised place in society which in spite of prominent exceptions he did not occupy in America until the day of their success. When I was young, wrote Edmund Clarence Stedman, New York looked with distrust if not with contempt upon working writers. Newspaper salaries were very low, and a man who got his living by writing was in the same class as a man who got his living by acting. He was almost forced into Bohemia. And speaking of the brilliant and erratic company at Pfaffs, he concludes: "If there had been a *Century*, a *Cosmopolitan*, and a score of other paying magazines, I suppose they would have been as conservative as our modern authors and would have dined above stairs and not under the pavement." And, finally, one cannot reiterate too often the material debt of American literature to the magazine. The lives and letters of authors cry it in and between all the lines—but for the magazine very few could have lived to tell the tale. "It is only with the modern development of the newspaper and the magazine," says the House of Harper, "that authorship may be said to have become a lucrative profession." We are apt to think of our literary hand-to-mouth period as long ago—so radical and immediate was the change wrought by the International Copyright Act. But that past is not so shadowy as shady. So late as 1881 the *Century* was saying, "Not many prominent American novels have of late years reached the reader in the first instance between book-covers." And if this might be said of novels, what of the rest of books? Before the Committee of Congress appointed to inquire whether any real need existed for the proposed copyright, Mr. Dana Estes said in 1886: "For two years past, though I belong to a publishing house (Estes and

Lauriat) which emits nearly one million dollars' worth of books per year, I have absolutely refused to entertain the idea of publishing an American manuscript. It is impossible to make the books of most American authors pay unless they are first published and acquire recognition through the columns of the magazines. Were it not for that one saving opportunity of the great American magazines, which are now the leading ones of the world and have an international reputation and circulation, American authorship would be at a still lower ebb than at present."

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